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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PREACHING TO BUILD AND CULTIVATE APOSTOLIC VISION**

by

Christopher Alan Volz

The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the changes made by participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church, Houston, Texas, following twenty-eight sermons designed to build and cultivate apostolic vision over a fifty-seven-week period. The subjects were the adult worship participants.

An initial and posttest questionnaire used designed apostolic vision and sermon scales to measure the change in the participants. Apostolic vision scales assessed the subjects' affective, cognitive, and commitment changes; sermon scales quantified the soul, narrative imagination, and clarity variations. The questionnaires did provide an effective way to measure change in feelings, knowledge, and behavior of participants, suggesting, intentional systematic preaching builds and cultivates apostolic vision.

Three premises for effective preaching were also developed and measured: (1) preaching with soul, (2) preaching with clarity, and (3) preaching with narrative imagination. The findings of this research study demonstrated that these premises were met. The subjects heard, believed, understood, enrolled, and committed to the apostolic vision built and cultivated through the preaching program.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
PREACHING TO BUILD AND CULTIVATE APOSTOLIC VISION

presented by

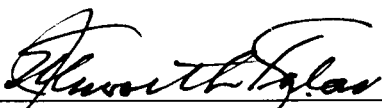
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**PREACHING TO BUILD AND CULTIVATE APOSTOLIC VISION**

**A Dissertation**

**Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**Of the requirements for the degree**

**Doctor of Ministry**

**by**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	x
CHAPTER 1	
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM .....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Description of the Project .....	5
Purpose .....	7
Research Question #1 .....	7
Research Question #2 .....	7
Research Question #3 .....	7
Research Question #4 .....	7
Definition of Terms .....	7
Apostolic Vision .....	7
Whole-Person Change .....	8
Conversational Style Preaching .....	8
Congregational Context .....	9
Community Demographic Overview .....	9
Community Characteristics .....	10
Contextual Considerations .....	13
Biblical Precedents .....	14
The Witness of Preaching .....	15
The Apostolic Mandate .....	17

The Importance of Vision .....	23
Methodology .....	25
Subjects .....	25
Variables .....	26
Instrumentation and Data Collection .....	26
Delimitation and Generalizability .....	27
Overview of the Dissertation .....	27
CHAPTER 2	
REVIEW OF THE SELECTED LITERATURE.....	28
The Witness of Preaching .....	30
The Narrative or Story Sermon .....	31
The Problem-Solving or Creativity Paradigm Sermon .....	33
The Image-Shaped Sermon .....	35
Recovering Apostolic Vision .....	36
Making Disciples .....	37
Hungering for Righteousness .....	40
Being Ambassadors of Reconciliation .....	43
Discipling Unlikely and Irredeemable People .....	47
Encouraging an Environment of Wonder .....	49
Sustaining a Healthy Balance .....	51
The Importance of Vision .....	55
Definition of Vision .....	56
Birthing Vision .....	58
The Role of Intuition .....	58

The Role of Personal Values .....	59
Building a Shared Vision .....	61
Step #1: Incubating a Vision .....	61
Step #2: Enrolling Others into a Vision .....	62
Step #3: Implementing the Vision .....	63
Developing a Vision for Ministry .....	65
Preaching to Build and Cultivate Apostolic Vision .....	66
Premise #1: Preaching with Soul .....	66
Premise #2: Preaching with Clarity .....	66
Premise #3: Preaching with Narrative Imagination .....	67
CHAPTER 3	
DESIGN OF THE STUDY .....	68
Research Questions .....	69
Research Question #1 .....	69
Research Question #2 .....	70
Research Question #3 .....	70
Research Question #4 .....	71
Population and Sample .....	71
Methodology .....	71
Variables.....	72
Instrumentation .....	73
Data Collection .....	74
Confidentiality and Anonymity .....	74
Questionnaire Administration .....	75



Worship Attendance .....	76
Data Analysis .....	76
CHAPTER 4	
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY .....	77
Profile of the Subjects .....	77
Reliability .....	79
Descriptive Data.....	81
Changes in Apostolic Vision Subscales .....	83
Affect Subscale.....	84
Cognitive Subscale.....	84
Commitment Subscale.....	85
Composite Subscale.....	85
Sermon Attendance .....	85
Changes in Sermon Scale and Subscales .....	86
Soul Subscale .....	88
Clarity Subscale.....	88
Narrative/ Imagination Subscale.....	88
Composite Subscale.....	88
Regression Analysis for Apostolic Vision Scale .....	88
Intervening Variables .....	89
Summary of Significant Findings .....	90
CHAPTER 5	
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	92
Summary of Research Method .....	93

Summary of Major Findings .....	94
Change in Congregant’s Response .....	95
Conclusions .....	97
Implications of Findings and Practical Applications .....	98
Weaknesses of the Study .....	100
Contribution to Research Methodology .....	100
Further Studies .....	101
Final Remarks .....	102
 APPENDIXES	
A: Survey One Questionnaire and Mailings .....	103
B: Survey Two Questionnaire and Mailings .....	108
C: What the Experts Say about Vision .....	112
D: Sermon Evaluations by Doctor Jim Jackson .....	113
WORKS CITED .....	114

## LIST OF TABLES

Number	Page
1.1 Systematic Preaching Plan for Research Study .....	6
1.2 Demographics for the Western Area of Pearland, Texas.....	10
1.3 Insights on Renewal from First and Second Corinthians .....	22
2.1 Warren’s Lowry’s, and Wilson’s Five-Step Problem-Solving Method.....	35
2.2 Models of Pastoral Authority.....	38
3.1 Apostolic Vision Subscales.....	73
3.2 Sermon Subscales.....	74
4.1 Demographic Information for Subjects of Research Study.....	79
4.2 Internal Consistency Reliability for Apostolic Vision and Sermon Scales.....	81
4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Apostolic Vision Subscales.....	82
4.4 Apostolic Vision Scale: t-Test for Paired Two Sample for Means.....	84
4.5 Commitment Subscale: Independent Samples Test for Number of Sermons Heard	86
4.6 Descriptive Statistics for Sermon Scale.....	87
4.7 Sermon Scale: Independent Samples Test for # of Sermons Heard .....	87
4.8 Regression Analysis Model Summary for Apostolic Vision Scale .....	89
4.9 Apostolic Vision Scale: Independent Samples for Months Attended .....	90
5.1 Application of Apostolic Vision Criteria to Sermon Planning .....	99

## LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Page
4.1 $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$ and significance for commitment subscale grouped by sermons heard .....	86
5.1 Shepherd of the Heart's worship and giving patterns during research study .....	96

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM**

All the ingredients for dynamic growth were at Cypress United Methodist Church—biblical preaching, solid music, warmth from the congregation, high participation in Sunday school, commitment to biblical stewardship by the core members, and a sense of vitality. Attending on any given Sunday, one sensed the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Located minutes from Compaq's headquarters in northwest Houston, the area within a five mile radius of the church experienced significant growth of new residents moving to the area. Within ten minutes north and south, two other United Methodist congregations reported record growth and participation. Despite positive growth indicators, the membership growth and worship attendance at Cypress United Methodist Church remained flat, participation in special ministry events was inconsistent, and recruiting leadership was an ongoing, major undertaking.

Cypress United Methodist Church did not experience dynamic growth as I served this congregation as the senior associate pastor. A vision statement was thought to be the solution. Teaming with the laity, a vision statement was written, and the church council approved it. One year later the growth statistics showed little change. Attendance at ministry team meetings reached an all time low.

### **Background of the Study**

Baffled by the lack of sustained, dynamic growth when all the ingredients that church growth required—(1) high population growth in the surrounding area, (2) solid and inspired biblical preaching, (3) strong music program, (4) active Sunday school program, and (5) detectable sense of warmth and welcome from the congregation—were

apparent, I thought at length about this problem and came up with three explanations.

First, preaching has a positive impact in assisting in shaping the faith and vision of its hearers. In my first pastoral assignment as a student intern I preached a two-month series on vision. Afterward this small congregation (one hundred members) developed a mission statement for the first time in their twenty-year existence. Looking back at the sermons preached during that time, I realize my skill as a preacher has improved significantly since those beginning days as a novice preacher, yet the preaching had a positive effect.

James Earl Massey writes, “Preaching is an agency by which that love expresses itself to bring hearers into community and preaching is a giant part of the divine strategy for shaping and sustaining community” (Burdensome Joy 51). Preaching is meant to do something, to effect a difference in and for people:

Preachers must seek to capture the movement of minds and spirits within the group; they must seek to harness listeners’ interest and direct the state of affairs. They do this through readiness with words, all of them qualitatively loaded, and with a strict sense of timing, knowing when to speed up the pace, and when to slow it down. (74)

In other words, preaching is eventful; preaching can enhance life. It summons persons to a duty, warns about false paths, encourages a right action, gains supporters to a right cause, and presses for a decision about choosing life over death. (78)

Simply put, preaching is eventful in keeping vision alive and, more importantly, can help bring vision into reality. Two months of preaching from a novice preacher showed some behavioral change—perhaps multiple treatments for consecutive weeks spread out over one year would show even more significant change in the congregants.

Second, since preaching can truly influence its hearers, then a preacher should be able to build and cultivate vision by developing a preaching program that is intentional

and systematic in its efforts to help shape its hearers. A possible explanation for the weak participation and growth at Cypress United Methodist Church was that vision was not built and cultivated from the pulpit in an intentional, systematic way. The preaching at Cypress United Methodist Church focused on using the lectionary as its method of determining the sermon theme. Consequently, the vision was not appropriated in the life of the church because the congregants did not know it nor how it applied to their daily lives.

Preaching was meant to be persuasive and to bring about positive change. The task of intentional, systematic preaching is not to be taken lightly. The work of preaching was commissioned to assist in shaping the faith of congregants so that a desired future can be visualized and then realized: “[The Apostles’] story reminds us about the power of heralded truth. It is no small matter to help bring persons to faith, to assist in shaping them as believers, to remain in travail for them” (Massey, Burdensome Joy 81). The frequency and interval of sermons preached makes a difference in whether positive change is both visualized and appropriated by the congregants. Change is not appropriated until it is visualized.

Rick Warren stresses the importance of casting vision “every twenty-six days to keep the church going in the right direction” (Purpose Driven Church 111). He calls this the “Nehemiah Principle” because Nehemiah rallied the people back to work by reorganizing the work of building of the wall and recasting the vision after twenty-six days into the project (111). He says, “It is amazing how quickly human beings—and churches—lose their sense of purpose” (111). Warren believes that communicating vision is “the foremost responsibility of leadership” (112). He then suggests that vision can be best cast by continuously restating it with creative redundancy while personalizing it at



least every twenty-six days. Obviously vision can be cast in many different ways. Warren suggests six ways—slogans, symbols, Scripture, stories, specific encounters with people, and spending time with the influencers (112-13).

My interest is in building and cultivating vision in a way that has the greatest impact on hearers. My hypothesis is that the greatest impact in shaping congregants' faith occurs when vision is built and cultivated from the pulpit in an intentional, systematic way. Multiple occurrences over an extended period of time at regular intervals are needed in order for the preacher to assist in the visualizing a desired future and in bringing about positive change. The ability to visualize a desired future fuels positive change—both individually and corporately.

Third, the lack of growth at Cypress United Methodist Church resulted because the vision being built and cultivated from the pulpit needed to be mission-driven and apostolic. Whether the kind of vision built and conveyed makes a difference in whether a vision is incorporated into the congregation's life is an important consideration. Certainly the apostolic community believed that a vision could be brought into reality as they preached throughout the Gentile world of the first century. That the apostolic message prevailed says something about what vision needs to be built and cultivated.

My conclusion is that apostolic vision effectively built and cultivated from the pulpit brings about a dynamic, mission-driven church. Both why the Church needs to build and cultivate apostolic vision and what makes a vision apostolic needs further explanation.

First, today's Church exists in a new millennium and the paradigm for ministry is changing. A Church is being born around us; the Christendom paradigm of the past is fading. The great mission that undergirded the Church's strength and fueled its growth is

no longer clear (Mead 84). Unprecedented is the opportunity to reach a transitional society with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many compare today's transitional world to the world that the gospel made its entrance—the world of the church described in Acts and in Paul's letters. An urgency exists to present clearly God's vision of healing, love, and salvation to today's confused, transitional world.

Second, Apostolic Christianity is by definition a community formed, shaped, and empowered by a vision of salvation within a difficult and even hostile environment (Mead 11-13). As mentioned before and depicted in the book of Acts the transitional world in which the Church was birthed, exhibits similarities to today's transitional world (Snyder 22). I, along with others, believe the West is once again a vast mission field (Hunter, Church for the Unchurched 37) in need of apostolic vision.

In summary, three possible explanations are suggested as reasons for the lack of sustained, dynamic growth at Cypress United Methodist Church:

1. The lack of sustained, dynamic growth results from vision not being built and cultivated from the pulpit;
2. Preaching that is not intentional and systematic in building and cultivating vision results in the lack of sustained, dynamic growth; and,
3. A vision that is not apostolic results in the lack of sustained, dynamic growth.

Whether these three assumptions can be validated was the purpose for undertaking this research project entitled: *Preaching to Build and Cultivate Apostolic Vision*.

### **Description of the Project**

This project consisted of six sermon series on building and cultivating apostolic vision given over a period of fifty-seven weeks. The sermons were preached during the Sunday morning worship service at a new church start named Shepherd of the Heart

United Methodist Church. I was the congregation's senior pastor. All of the sermons in these series were exegetical messages, with each sermon focusing on the biblical texts shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1. Systematic Preaching Plan for Research Study**

FIRST SERMON SERIES: <i>The Right Stuff</i>	SECOND SERMON SERIES: <i>The New Morning</i>	THIRD SERMON SERIES: <i>Living Water</i>
<i>A Sense of Destiny</i> Nehemiah 1 • 1/16/00	<i>There Is Always a Way Home</i> Luke 24 • 4/30/00	<i>Taste the Living Water</i> John 2:1-11 • 7/16/00
<i>Partners for the Journey</i> Nehemiah 2 • 1/23/00	<i>Meet God</i> Acts 2 • 5/7/00	<i>Step Into the Water</i> John 3:1-9 • 7/23/00
<i>Teamwork Works!</i> Nehemiah 3 • 1/30/00	<i>The Real Thing</i> Acts 6 • 5/14/00	<i>Are You Really Thirsty</i> John 4:7-30 • 7/30/00
<i>Stay the Course</i> Nehemiah. 4 • 2/6/00	<i>New Eyes, New Vision</i> Acts 9 • 5/21/00	<i>Finding Calm Waters</i> John 5:2-16 • 8/6/00
<i>Expanding the Vision</i> Nehemiah 5 • 2/13/00	<i>Reaching Out</i> Acts 10 • 5/28/00	<i>Share the Living Waters</i> John 13:1-21 • 08/13/00
<i>Crossing the Finish Line</i> Nehemiah 6 • 2/20/00		
FOURTH SERMON SERIES: <i>Life.... Who's Winning?</i>	FIFTH SERMON SERIES: <i>Great Expectations</i>	SIXTH SERMON SERIES: <i>The Heart of the Shepherd</i>
<i>Overcoming Stress</i> 2 Corinthians 4:1-18 • 10/01/00	<i>You Matter to God</i> Jeremiah 1:1-10 • 1/21/01	<i>The Voice of the Shepherd</i> Psalm 23 • 2/25/01
<i>Building Relationships</i> John 12:1-8 • 10/08/00	<i>Living a Life of Purpose</i> Jeremiah 8:4-12 • 1/28/01	<i>It Is Well With My Soul</i> Psalm 23 • 3/4/01
<i>Living Successfully</i> Acts 10:1-8 • 10/15/00	<i>Rich with Possibilities</i> Jeremiah 18:1-6 • 2/4/01	
<i>Taking Meaningful Risks</i> Luke 19:1-10 • 10/22/00	<i>Investing in Tomorrow</i> Jeremiah 32:6-15 • 2/11/01	
<i>Finding Strength that Lasts</i> Judges 14:1-14 • 10/29/00	<i>A Life Well-Spent</i> Jeremiah 40:1-6	

The sermons were prepared to communicate the message of the biblical text using a synthesis of preaching styles taken from previous experience and course work while I was a Beeson pastor (1998-99). A whole-person response— affective, cognitive, and

commitment changes in the subjects—through my use of soul, clarity, and narrative imagination was the objective of the pulpit communication.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes made by the worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church as a result of six sermon series (a total of twenty-eight sermons) designed to build and cultivate apostolic vision.

### **Research Question #1**

What knowledge of, affect toward, and commitment to apostolic vision does the congregation hold prior to the completion of the preaching program?

### **Research Question #2**

What changes occur in the congregation's affect toward, knowledge of, and commitment to apostolic vision subsequent to the preaching program?

### **Research Question #3**

What elements of the sermon design and delivery assisted the congregation in experiencing, understanding, and incorporating into the life of the church and community apostolic vision?

### **Research Question #4**

What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's attitude toward accepting apostolic vision?

### **Definition of Terms**

Three terms used throughout this project need defining.

### **Apostolic Vision**

The concept of *apostolic vision* is developed throughout the dissertation.

Apostolic vision is defined by five biblical precedents discussed later in this chapter: (1) making disciples, (2) hungering for righteousness, (3) being ambassadors of reconciliation, (4) discipling unlikely people, and (5) encouraging wonder. Witnessing is the fruit of a worshipping and nurturing community and is the heartbeat of the mission of the Church. The church that communicates and celebrates the gospel clearly and relevantly enough to engage non-churched, pre-Christian people also engages many churched non-Christians and those churched who want to be part of a church with a vision for reaching lost people.

### **Whole-Person Change**

*Whole-person change* looks at the factors that measure the effectiveness of the preaching event over a period of time. The factors being suggested are affect, cognition, and commitment.

### **Conversational Style Preaching**

The definition for *conversational preaching* has several definitions. Eugene L. Lowry suggests that conversational preaching is where the preacher and congregation envision themselves as exploring together the mystery of the Word for the lives of the worshipers. They all gather symbolically at the round table that has no head and no foot (27). The main objective is seen as connection and intimacy rather than persuasion to a particular point of view and/or transmission of religious truths.

Conversational style preaching for the purposes of this project is seen as communicating with the worshiper without barriers such as a pulpit or notes. Connection and intimacy are seen as objectives but not at the expense of the truths of biblical faith. Sincerity, enthusiasm, and earnestness tear down barriers to allow the real self to break free. In that sense effective delivery approximates the everyday give-and-take of

conversation. Conversational style preaching is communicating authentically from the soul about something we strongly believe in a manner that connects with the souls of the hearers.

### **Congregational Context**

Another important consideration for determining the validity of the three assumptions made above was the congregational context in which the research was done. I did not return to Cypress United Methodist Church after spending one year at Asbury Theological Seminary as a Beeson Pastor. My appointment from the bishop of the Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church was to start a church in the rapidly growing area west of Pearland and about fifteen minutes south of downtown Houston.

### **Community Demographic Overview**

The population of the Pearland area grew by 60.7 percent between 1990 and 2000, from 33,033 to 53,068, compared to 10.4 percent for the United States as a whole. Over the next five years, the population is expected to grow by at least 17.9 percent from 53,068 to 62,588, compared to 4.5 percent for the United States as a whole. This projection does not include the forecasted growth of Shadow Creek Ranch (located about one mile west of Pearland) of twelve thousand homes.

The number of households in the Pearland area increased by 67 percent between 1990 and 2000, from 11,486 to 17,179, compared to 12.2 percent for the United States as a whole. Over the next five years, the number of households in Pearland is expected to increase by 19.8 percent, from 19,179 to 22,986, compared to 5.5 percent for the United States as a whole (“Census ’90: Updates and Projections”).

**Table 1.2. Demographics for Western Area of Pearland, Texas\***

CENSUS RESULTS				GROWTH (X TIMES)		
CATEGORY	2004	1999	1990	SINCE '99	SINCE '90	SINCE '80
POPULATION	21,859	18,862	12,128	1.16	1.80	3.40
HOUSEHOLDS	8,018	6,794	4,223	1.18	1.90	4.20

AGE (POPULATION)				ETHNICITY (PERCENTAGE)		
CATEGORY	2004	1999	% >	CATEGORY	2004	1999
0 TO 17	5,814	5,018	15.9	WHITE	65.70	68.30
18 TO 29	2,726	2,416	12.8	BLACK	7.00	6.60
30 TO 54	7,527	6,667	13.0	OTHER	4.40	3.90
55+	4,030	3,043	32.4	HISPANIC	22.90	21.20

Source: "Census '90: Updates and Projections."

\*Statistics taken for 3-mile Radius from FM 518 and Cullen Street (the proposed church site).

The area that the new church plant, named Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church (SOH), was assigned to was west of Pearland, which I will call West Pearland. West Pearland was nearly nonexistent just twenty years ago; it grew from 6,430 residents to approximately 22,000 people—an increase of over three and a half times in twenty-four years (see Table 1.2). The Pearland Chamber of Commerce and the Pearland Independent School District (PISD) projected that West Pearland would continue its rapid increase by doubling by 2009 ("Pearland Community Profile" 20). Another twenty thousand residents in Shadow Creek Ranch was not accounted for by the PISD projections.

### **Community Characteristics**

Four words describe the residents of West Pearland: (1) diverse, (2) suburban, (3) ated, and (4) transitional.

**A diverse multicultural community.** The principal of Silverlake Elementary

School reported seventeen different ethnic cultures fed her school. The two non-Caucasian groups most represented are African American and Asian American. The actual percentage of each group has been difficult to obtain because of the rapid growth of the community. A Pearland Independent School District (PISD) representative estimated that nearly 30 percent of the community is non-Caucasian (“Pearland Community Profile” 32).

**A commuter suburb.** The master planners of the community marketed West Pearland as the place to live because of its convenience to downtown Houston, to the medical center area, to the Galleria area, and to NASA. Since only recently restaurants, grocery stores, and other services have been built, people are used to commuting to fulfill these needs. An estimated 73 percent of the adult residents in West Pearland commuted to their jobs out of community (“Census ’90: Updates and Projections”).

Many of the residents who desire to go to church do not think twice about commuting to large churches easily accessible from their commuting routes. Perhaps convenience to commuting route is why out of six churches started by other Christian denominations from 2000 to 2003, only two are still viable. Two established churches both with fewer than one thousand members are located near the eastern limits of West Pearland—Lutheran, Willow Creek style community church. A few more miles to the east in downtown Pearland are several large well-established churches—Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and United Methodist. For a significant number of residents in West Pearland, going to a church located in their community is not an expectation.

**Highly educated people.** A high percentage of young upwardly mobile professionals (median age for Pearland is thirty-four years old) educated as engineers, geoscientists, accountants, lawyers, doctors, bankers, and teachers make West Pearland



their home. College educated professionals account for 72 percent of the adult residents in West Pearland (“Pearland Community Profile” 24). These professionals, many with advanced degrees in their profession, comprise of nearly an even mix of men and women (22). Not uncommon is to find new families where both mom and dad are professionals commuting to Houston for their jobs. Thus, numerous child care facilities catering to the children of these professionals can be found throughout the community. Discretionary time is a sought after premium in West Pearland; when time is available, these professionals often choose to use it for recreational or family activities. Church is not on the short list for using their available time.

**Transitional and unsettled people.** West Pearland also was transitional and unsettled. Simply put, movement in and out of the community was continuous and prolific. For example, after two years Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church (SOH) experienced the following: nine of the top twelve leadership positions were vacated, income was lost from eight of the top ten giving units, and membership decreased from 130 to below one hundred. Because of the transient nature of the community, people moved because of changing job situations—most because of the collapse of Enron. Perhaps the uncertainty of keeping their jobs is why West Pearland residents did not invest in putting roots in the community. Rather than thinking they have a home, they thought that where they lived was just a place to go to at night to sleep. West Pearland was there choice for lodging because of its convenience for the lifestyle they had chosen. West Pearland was unsettled because the residents were transitional people living in a diverse neighborhood. Their important decisions were based on convenience and they were used to getting what they wanted.

## Contextual Considerations

Thomas G. Bandy suggests six basic felt needs exist for people living in a transitional, new paradigm community like West Pearland (15-29).

First, postmodern people long to be different than the persons they see in the mirror—they want *to be changed*;

Second, postmodern people want somebody with authenticity, integrity and insight to guide them through the ethical ambiguities they face every day—they want *to be mentored*;

Third, postmodern people want release from feeling victimized and helpless every time they awaken to a new day—they want *to be esteemed*;

Fourth, postmodern people want to take responsibility for themselves and for their community—they want *to fulfill their destiny*;

Fifth, postmodern people want to be healed and to recover from brokenness that handicaps them every day—they want *to be whole*; and,

Sixth, postmodern people want to be liberated and to escape from the self-destructive behavior patterns that rob their lives of meaning every day of their existence—they want *to be free*.

Whether Bandy's basic felt needs could be addressed with an intentional, systematic preaching program on apostolic vision needs further discussion.

The objective of the preaching task is to change the congregants' behavior by strengthening their faith, building their hope, and assisting them in seeing the a desired future. Obviously if preachers do not effectively communicate to their congregants, then the preaching program will be ineffective and the vision will not be appropriated.

Whether Cypress United Methodist congregants could or could not relate to the preacher

because their felt needs were not addressed is a valid question. The preaching plan used for this study took in account the basic felt needs of the West Pearland residents so that any contextual uncertainty about how the congregants related to the preacher could be minimized.

### **Biblical Precedents**

The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the effective, cognitive, and commitment changes made by the adult worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church as a result of six sermon series (a total of twenty-eight sermons) designed to build and cultivate apostolic vision. Previously hypothesized were three important considerations.

First, the lack of sustained, dynamic growth results from vision not being built and cultivated from the pulpit. Framed as a null hypothesis this first consideration reads: *the absence of clarity, narrative imagination, soul form the preacher results in minimal affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants.*

Second, preaching that is not intentional and systematic in building and cultivating vision results in the lack of sustained, dynamic growth or as a null hypothesis: *the absence of an intentional, systematic method of preaching about apostolic vision results in statistically insignificant affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants.*

Third, a vision that is not apostolic results in the lack of sustained, dynamic growth or again as a null hypothesis: *the absence of apostolic influences on preaching about vision results in insignificant affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants.*

This section looks to biblical precedents to verify the validity of these

hypothesized assumptions. Discussion addressing these assumptions is best divided into three parts: First, whether *the witness of preaching* assists in bringing about positive change in the hearer's faith and vision; second, whether *apostolic vision* effectively witnesses to the prevailing, even hostile culture; and third whether *vision is important* in equipping and empowering congregants to be mission driven and apostolic.

### **The Witness of Preaching**

Paul was a writer, yet when Paul wrote to the congregation in Rome, he confessed, "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith" (Rom. 1:11-12). Paul realized that some ministries could not take place apart from face-to-face contact. Even the reading of an inspired letter will not substitute. "That is why," he says, "I am eager to preach the gospel to you . . . who are in Rome" (1:15). In 1 Corinthians he again makes the point: "God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Power comes through the word preached (Robinson, Biblical Preaching 17).

To the New Testament writers, preaching stood as the event through which God works. Peter, for example, reminded his readers that they had "been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). Whether the word affected their lives was Peter's concern. "And this," Peter explained, "is the word which was preached to you" (1:25). Through preaching God redeemed them (Robinson, Biblical Preaching 17).

In Thessalonians Paul recounts the spiritual history of those who had "turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). That about-face occurred, explained the apostle, because "when you

received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thess. 2:13). Preaching, in Paul’s mind, did not consist of discussing religion; rather, God himself spoke through the personality and message of a preacher to confront men and women and bring them to himself (Robinson, Biblical Preaching 18). For example, in Paul’s farewell address in Acts 20:20-24, Paul holds nothing back that could be useful to his hearers:

You know that I have not hesitated to *preach* [emphasis mine] anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have *declared* [emphasis mine] to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task of *testifying* [emphasis mine] to the gospel of God’s grace. (Acts 20:20-24)

He both proclaimed the message and taught in both public and private locales. He was even prepared to die for the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace. The following traces Paul’s discourse in Acts 20:

1. Taught from house to house—Acts 20:20 (corresponding texts: Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15; Phil. 2),
2. Helpful/ profitable teaching—Acts 20:20 (corresponding texts: Gal. 4:16; 2 Cor. 4:2),
3. Preached to both Jew and Greek—Acts 20:21 (corresponding texts: Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 9:20), and,
4. His job—to preach the gospel—Acts 20:24 (corresponding texts: Gal. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:1).

Paul places importance on bearing witness as a vital ingredient in preaching the gospel. Bearing witness to the gospel means engaging in serious and responsible biblical preaching (Long, Witness of Preaching 48). Because Paul placed importance on bearing witness to the gospel, he encouraged Timothy to “to preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). The apostles in Acts 6 also placed importance on preaching after they encountered a problem. Hard feelings developed among the Greek-speaking believers—Hellenists—toward the Hebrew-speaking believers because their widows were being discriminated against in the daily food lines (Peterson 249):

It would not be right for us to abandon our responsibilities for *preaching and teaching* [emphasis mine] the word of God to help with the care of the poor. So, choose seven, and we will assign them this task. Meanwhile, we will stick to our assigned tasks of *prayer and speaking God’s Word* [emphasis mine]. The congregation thought this was a great idea. The apostles laid on hands and commissioned them for their task. The Word of God prospered. (249)

The apostles thought preaching important enough to delegate other tasks so that they could spend more time preaching and speaking God’s word. Serving tables was not beneath them; they were called *to preach and to pray*. When they did, the Word of God prospered. The apostles’ solution to the dispute enlarged the ministry of the church.

In Acts 7-8, two of the apostles take up the mantle of leadership by preaching and teaching just as the twelve did before. Luke portrays them as bridge figures leading to the next stage of mission and witness (Witherington 251). Not only preaching but also preaching that bares witness to the mission of the Church is the heartbeat of the gospel.

### **The Apostolic Mandate**

The heartbeat that bares witness to the mission of the Church is apostolic. In other words, apostolic vision fueled the mission of the early Church, and apostolic vision gave the early Church the resolve to conquer the Roman Empire without physical violence.

Five sections of Scripture helps to characterize apostolic vision.

**The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20).** The Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 is often considered to be the fundamental paradigm for apostolic identity, the heartbeat of the witness and mission of the Church. The importance placed on the Great Commission is even seen in the grammatical construction. The grammatical center is “go therefore and make disciples,” while the clauses beginning with the words “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching” are subordinate to “discipling.”

Understanding the structure of the whole gospel of Matthew helps to explain the importance of the Great Commission to Matthew’s vision for the kingdom. Five discourses appear in Matthew: Sermon on the Mount, Missionary Discourse, Parables of the Kingdom, Teachings on the Church, and Eschatology, Crisis, and Parousia. The Great Commission serves as the climax of Matthew’s gospel. Some theologians say that the Great Commission more appropriately could be called “the Last Commission” (Arias and Johnson 20).

These five discourses in Matthew can be thought of as the handbook for teachers and church leaders in their missionary work with Jews and Gentiles. Intertwined with training in right doctrine is also the right way of doing and living and dying (Arias and Johnson 20). In other words, the kingdom of God is not something to learn about theoretically but to live and to produce. The teaching mission entrusted to the disciples was centered on the mandate “to make disciples of all nations.” Apostolic mission, then, must include being faithful to the task of making disciples for the kingdom of God, “teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

**The Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40).** Jesus also commanded his disciples to love one another:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matt. 22:37-40)

Christ-centered evangelism cares for people in sin, lost and oppressed, laboring and heavy laden, hungry for real food and real fellowship (Snyder 42). Thus, Jesus taught his disciples that to incarnate justice, to hunger for justice, is putting the kingdom and its justice as priority. Righteousness is leaping to the need of neighbor with neighbor being the person in need of the gospel.

**The poor, the imprisoned, the blind and the oppressed (Luke 4:14-21).** Jesus came preaching the gospel to the poor:

If our concern is to plant New Testament churches, we had better take a second look at the New Testament gospel and what it says about the poor. The good news is to be carried to every class and people. The poor and the treatment they receive are strong indicators of the faithfulness of God’s people. The church needs the poor. (Snyder 37-42)

In Luke 4:14-21, Jesus targets the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed.

Whether Jesus was interacting in a physical sense to *the poor* or whether he was using an *economic metaphor* to describe a spiritual condition is a complex question that has a simple answer—yes. Jesus is making a both/and statement. As shown in the list below the biblical record is clear that the poor are to have special place in the hearts of believers:

1. God created the rich and poor like (Pro. 22:2),
2. Righteous poverty is preferable to corrupt wealth (Ps. 37:16),
3. God’s people have a responsibility to act on behalf of the poor (Ex. 22:22),
4. Harvesters are obligated to leave gleanings for the poor (Lev. 19:9),
5. Cornelius’ gifts to the poor are seen as a memorial offering to God (Acts 10:4),



6. Christians have obligations to give alms to the poor (Matt. 5:42), and,

7. The directive of the Jerusalem Council is to give alms to the poor (Gal. 2:10).

Nevertheless, when Jesus says, “Today the Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21), he is announcing that he is the Messiah but he is also saying to the people of that synagogue in Nazareth that they are the poor, the blind, the prisoners, and the enslaved:

I want you people to know I’m not looking at the surface of your lives where people categorize you in terms of your wealth or position in society. I want you to know that I am looking at the center of your souls. Do you know what I see? I see poverty! I see imprisonment! I see blindness! And I see enslavement! I’ve come this morning to speak to people like you.  
(Volz 6)

I believe that is why the people were so upset with Jesus. He saw their spiritual condition as it really was, and they knew it. The poor are those who are in economic and social need and those who need the gospel. They are those marginalized by society, those who were put down by the religious elite of the time, those considered not worthy to be in God’s kingdom. Jesus’ teachings about *the poor* can be summarized by the following:

1. The poor gave credibility to his ministry;
2. The poor were more receptive and willing to accept the gospel;
3. The poor were the target of the gospel;
4. The poor were to be given special attention; and,
5. The poor were to be ministered to by anyone desiring to be obedient to Jesus’

vision for the poor.

In John 21, Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” When Peter replies, “Yes!” Jesus in each case tells Peter to “feed my sheep.” Jesus tells Peter the costs will be high. “You will be led where you won’t want to go.” Peter then asks about the “beloved disciple” and Jesus responds, “What is that to you! Follow me!” Unmistakably, Jesus

placed urgency on caring for the poor, the lost, the oppressed, and the broken—after all, the poor were Jesus’ sheep. Consequently, the essence of the gospel—Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, and resurrection—was to redeem the poor.

**Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5).** One of the most eloquent passages in Scripture, 2 Corinthians 5, is also one of the key passages in understanding apostolic vision. Paul explains that primarily the Corinthian Christians are “ambassadors for Christ” fully authorized to represent Christ in carrying on “the ministry of reconciliation” to people in Corinth and beyond Corinth. The main business of the church is to reach other people through the Church. George G. Hunter, III writes, “With an apostolic identity, the whole *People of God* know that the main business of the Church is to serve and disciple people who do not yet believe and follow Christ” (Church for the Unchurched 117). Paul writes, “God is making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:20). The Church’s privilege is to invite people to be reconciled to God and become followers of Jesus Christ (Radical Outreach 27).

The context for 2 Corinthians 5 is that Paul is writing to a church that was stuck in controversy and confusion. Somehow the Corinthian church had lost their apostolic identity and sense of mission. They were floundering with competing visions. The dysfunctional Corinthian church had five problems (see Table 1.3). What was Paul’s prescription to the Corinthian church? He prescribes five keys for the renewal of the Corinthian church (Hunter, Radical Outreach 26).

Church renewal comes from many changes over time. For the Corinthian church, unity came from knowing who they were, knowing their main business, and pulling together to achieve it. Health does not come until a church begins to reach out.

**Table 1.3. Insights on Renewal from First and Second Corinthians**

DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR IN CORINTH	PAUL'S PRESCRIPTION FOR RENEWAL
The church was split into theological factions (1 Cor. 1).	Paul admonishes the Corinthian church to remain rooted in the gospel they had received from him.
They had imported non-Christian beliefs and moral practices into the life of the church, including several forms of sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5).	Renewal is rooted in a clear shared identity; so Paul teaches about the Body of Christ and the need of each other's gifts to function as a unified body (1 Cor. 12).
The church was inflicted with gossip, quarreling, jealousy, anger, slander, selfishness, conceit, and disorder (2 Cor. 12:20).	Paul expresses that the Lord's presence in the Eucharist will bring believers together (1 Cor. 11).
They lacked unity on what was the mission of the church (1 Cor. 3).	Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit gifts all believers so that they can use their gifts to build the Church and its ministry (1 Cor. 12).
They were not reaching their neighbors with the Gospel.	Paul teaches that believers should seek the higher spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love and to most of all "to make love your aim" (1 Cor. 13).

Source: Hunter, Radical Outreach 46-49.

**Everyone in awe (Acts 2:42-47).** According to Acts 2:42-47, a threefold function characterized the early Church: worship, community, and witness. The early Christians "devoted themselves . . . to the breaking of bread and prayer" (Acts 2:42). This describes the church at worship. First-century Christians kept their church life vital through frequent praise and prayer. Worship—praising God and hearing God speak through the Word—lies at the heart of being God's people. In worship the church celebrates who God is and all God has done for his people. Worship renews its covenant to live for God's glory. It comes first among all things the church does for it is the special concern of Almighty God (Snyder 121).

Early Christians also devoted themselves to "the fellowship" (Acts 2:42):

As sharers in God's grace, they gave themselves to being and becoming the community of God's people. In Acts and throughout the New Testament we see building Christian community or fellowship as a basic function of the church. The believers broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people (Acts 2:46-47). This is a basic way of glorifying God. (Snyder 123)

God makes community and wants his people to grow continually as the community of faith. Just as a household is not really a family if it does not meet and spend time together, so believers do not really experience the church without Christian community. Community means shared life based on being born again in Jesus Christ. To be born again is to be born into God's family and community (Snyder 123).

The praise and fellowship described in Acts 2:42-47 brought an interesting result: "The Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). After persecution in the Jerusalem church, Acts 8:4 says, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." The early Church's worship and community sparked its witness:

A living Christian community has both the inclination and the power to witness. It witnesses both from concern for human need and for the sake of the coming Kingdom of God. Witness is not the primary purpose of the church but the inevitable and necessary fruit of a worshipping, nurturing community. Thus it is a high priority of the church's life in the world. (Snyder 124)

Witnessing becomes the necessary fruit of apostolic faith.

### **The Importance of Vision**

The Bible says, "Without a vision the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). Robert E. Logan writes, "It is the personal vision of the pastor or church planter, and his or her ability to communicate that vision, that drives churches to growth" (34).

God told Abraham to look up at the stars. Abraham's descendants would be like

those countless stars. Sarah was barren and too old to have children and laughed at the thought of having children. Nevertheless, God gave Abraham and Sarah a son named Isaac, making him a father of the nation of Israel. All of this began with a vision, which became the creative instrument through which God did his mighty work (Galloway, 20/20 Vision 31).

Paul writes in his prayer for the Ephesians in 3:14-20 that no one can measure the fullness of God's love, that God can do immeasurably more than all anyone asks or imagines. Vision is being able to expand preconceived ideas and allow God's power to be channeled through people to accomplish his vision.

Moses received the vision from God to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt. For years Moses prepared. Exodus 14 tells that as a result of ten plagues, the children of Israel were released from their bondage and marched out to the Red Sea. When they looked out across what they thought was an impossible body of water to cross, they were frightened. Behind them came the Egyptian army racing towards them in its chariots. They panicked and cried out, "What shall we do?"

The Lord told Moses to raise his staff and divide the water so that the Israelites could pass through to dry land. The sea parted and the Israelites marched through the opened sea to safety on the other side. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Dale E. Galloway paraphrases, "Faith is vision and vision is seeing a worthy possibility before it actually takes place" (Leading with Vision 12):

In fact, the whole eleventh chapter of Hebrews is about persons who trusted God for things that seemed impossible to them or others. They had a dream for a great future. They saw something beyond what happened in the ordinary. Their faith gave them a vision of the future, captured their imagination, and mobilized their resources. (13)

God can do immeasurably more than people can ask or imagine. The challenge is to free their minds of the self-imposed barriers placed on vision and to remember the vision God gave. The critical issue in society is a shortage of competent leadership with dedication to a vision that generates followers. Competent leadership is also the critical issue for churches.

Biblical precedents say that preaching is the most effective means to cultivate and build apostolic vision. Without apostolic vision the church fails in its mandate to follow the last commission as Jesus himself instructed the church. Without a vision, the people perish . . . *without apostolic vision, the church perishes.*

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes made by the worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church as a result of six sermon series designed to build and cultivate apostolic vision. This was an evaluative study in the quasi-experimental mode which utilizes a two-test design with a comparison group added after the first test to control for those in the original group who heard about apostolic vision prior to the first test.

### **Subjects**

The subjects of this study are those who attend the Sunday morning worship service at Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church at least once a month. For the original group surveyed, the population and the sample are identical; every adult (17 or older) who fits the worship criteria was asked to complete and return first and second survey questionnaires. After membership doubled shortly after the first test was ready to be sent out, a comparison group of the about the same size was asked to complete and return the second test questionnaire.

**Variables**

The independent variable of this research project was the sermon series. Six sermon series were preached intermittently over twelve months. While the biblical text directs the content of each sermon, specific attention was also given to shaping the sermon by employing communication aids that heighten the listener's receptivity to the message. These communication aids included the use of soul, clarity, and narrative imagination.

The dependent variables of this study were the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes made by the worship participants. Intervening variables, which might influence or help to explain outcomes, included age, length of time attending Shepherd of the Heart, the other sermons preached, involvement in cell groups, and participation in leadership.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection**

A researcher-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument used to measure the effects of the six sermon series in the lives of the worship participants (see Appendixes A and B). Survey One's questionnaire was mailed as soon as there was enough worship participants for a large enough sample. By this time, two sermon series had been completed on apostolic vision. To control for any possible skewing of Survey One's questionnaire's results, another comparison group was formed of worship participants who had started coming since Survey One's sermon series had been preached.

Following the sixth sermon series, Survey Two's questionnaire was mailed to both groups. Both questionnaires were identical. Each questionnaire included questions from the apostolic vision scales (affect, cognition, and commitment) and the sermon scales

(soul, clarity, and narrative imagination).

Confidentiality was assured by the use of respondent created codes. At the administration of each questionnaire, the respondents were instructed to re-create the same code. This method of coding allowed the researcher to track changes in the individual respondents over time.

The researcher-designed questionnaire served as the primary source of data collection for the affective and cognitive variables. The commitment variable was measured by the questionnaire responses and also by involvement in the life of the church. Involvement included participation in cell groups, frequency of worship attendance, financial giving, and serving in leadership. Since the respondent responses were confidential, involvement was measured as a general trend for the entire church.

### **Delimitation and Generalizability**

The study was limited to the worship participants of this new church start. Membership at the end of the study was eighty members with an average weekly worship attendance of one hundred twenty (includes adults and children). The congregation and the pastor enjoyed an encouraging and trusting relationship with good rapport and high morale. The sermon was the chosen format (independent variable) for this particular study.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 establishes the biblical, theological, and homiletical context for the study. The research design is presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the research findings. Chapter 5 provides a summary and interpretation of the research findings as well as offers suggestions for further inquiry.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Preaching to build and cultivate apostolic vision is the title for this research study. To remain true to this title, the discussion on the review of selected literature needs to answer three questions:

First, whether preaching is the most effective way to build and cultivate vision;

Second, whether vision is best built and cultivated in an intentional, systematic way from the pulpit; and,

Third, whether the kind of vision is important in assisting in affective, cognitive, and commitment changes of congregants.

Biblical precedents introduced in Chapter 1 suggests that the witness of preaching is eventful in shaping congregant's faith and thus vision is best built and cultivated in an intentional, systematic way from the pulpit. Also suggested was that vision provides the impetus and creativity for equipping and empowering affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in congregants. Consequently, the kind of vision was important in baring witness to the prevailing, even hostile culture and the witness needs to be apostolic. Five criterion were presented characterizing apostolic vision from a biblical perspective. I added a sixth criterion based on the selected literature.

Chapter 2 organizes the review of selected literature around three themes introduced in Chapter 1:

1. The witness of preaching,
2. The apostolic mandate, and,
3. The importance of vision.

Interest is growing in what is being called the new homiletic. Imagination and

narrative are now considered to be the crucial elements to communicating the biblical story. Eugene L. Lowry, Thomas G. Long, Richard L. Eslinger, Haddon W. Robinson, Fred B. Craddock, and Adam Hamilton posit that understanding the hearers and framing the sermon with them in mind leads to effective biblical preaching. Henry H. Mitchell, Richard F. Ward, James Earl Massey, Warren W. Wiersbe, Paul Scott Wilson, and J. Ellsworth Kalas believe that effective biblical preaching strives to reach the heart and soul of the hearers. In other words, the right brain where creativity and emotions are centered needs to be stimulated for the sermon to have lasting impact. Too much preaching, they say, centers only on the cognitive, deductive left-brain. Only after people's hearts and souls are impacted will they commit to action. Biblical preaching needs to follow Jesus' example and reach the whole person.

Theologians such as George G. Hunter, III, Howard A. Snyder, Ron Crandall, Joel B. Green, John R. W. Stott, Michael Slaughter, Leonard I. Sweet, Harry Lee Poe, Greg Odgen, and Loren B. Mead write about a new apostolic paradigm that has biblical roots in the apostolic church of the New Testament. They call for renewal and even for a new reformation. Stephen A. Rhodes and James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers posit that the new apostolic church is multicultural—where the nations meet (Rhodes 20).

Vision is the single most common theme in leadership studies. Literature on visionary leadership from both the business world and the church focuses on how leading edge, successful organizations create, build, and cultivate vision and core values. Much can be learned from leadership experts such as Peter F. Drucker, Burt Nanus, Peter M. Senge, James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, and others. Literature from both the evangelical and mainline churches on the importance that vision plays in church renewal follows closely the basic concepts from the business world.

## The Witness of Preaching

Prior to the second century the controlling structure of Christian preaching (*kerygma*) was narrative (Wardlaw 11). Narrative recollected and bore witness to what God in Christ had done, was doing, and would do to intervene graciously in human affairs. Narration regulated sermon design. Reflection, application, and impassioned exhortation took their places along the story line. First century apostolic preachers generally had three elements that were included in their narrative (11).

1. A proclamation of the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, seen as fulfillment of prophecy and involving humankind's responsibility;
2. The resultant evaluation of Jesus as both Lord and Christ; and,
3. A summons to repent and receive forgiveness of sins.

For example, scattered throughout his letters to the Corinthians, Paul admonishes the Corinthian church to remain rooted in the gospel that they had received from him— a gospel of Jesus Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:1) for humanities' sins (15:3) who was raised from death (15:4) that people might know Jesus Christ as Lord (2 Cor. 4:5) and be reconciled to God (5:18) and live the New Life: "He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them" (2 Cor. 5:15). Without doubt Paul imparted the gospel through preaching and teaching.

When the Church moved into the Hellenistic world to offer the gospel, preaching adopted a discursive style. Rather than narrative, reflection became the basic sermon framework. Church fathers from Origen to Chrysostom, while imbued with the mind of Christ, exegeted and preached with the mind of Plato and Aristotle (Wardlaw 11). Most American preachers in the twentieth century continued to model their preaching as an oral essay based on deduction and argument.

The shape of preaching is open to radical reorientation. The cultural shifts of the postmodern world no longer give wholesale sanction to the assumptions underlying the argument form (Wardlaw 13). A new paradigm for preaching that turns to the homiletical patterns and convictions that had been abandoned or marginalized by modernity is now operative. This new homiletic represents the recovery of the apostolic, premodern paradigm (Lowry 21).

The new homiletic typically displays greater reliance upon image, narrative, and evocative phrase and focuses upon ordinary, everyday events and how they form the environment for the experience of the gospels, rather than upon heroic subjects and well-defined dramatic themes. These sermons tend to be more impressionistic, inviting the listener to get in on the act and to join with the preacher in the creation of meaning (Long and O'Day 170). Sermon design is centered on the process of discovery that provides the means to enable hearers to be active and responsible participants in the preaching event. I will discuss three identifiable types or models of this new homiletic: the narrative (or story) sermon, the problem-solving (or creativity paradigm) sermon, and the image-shaped sermon.

### **The Narrative or Story Sermon**

This type of sermon consists of a story told. Story has been the chief vehicle of perhaps all the world civilizations, as they have sought to induct the young into society and to impress them with social contact. The advantages of this form of preaching can be summarized by the following:

**Gives contemporary appeal to the biblical tradition.** In the story sermon, the preacher's delivery lights up with expression when the preacher tells stories. One can safely say the congregation's attentiveness does, too. Thus, story sermons give

contemporary appeal to the biblical tradition.

**Engages at the emotional and feeling level.** A story sermon has the greatest chance of accomplishing its proper hoped for purpose because it arises out of the preacher's own faith. Stories deal with life and living in a real and concrete way and thus provide depth learning because they engage the hearers at the deepest feeling level.

**Transforms the hearer in a subversive way.** The story sermon harnesses in the hearer dreams of a desired future state. Truth can be stated in such a way that it penetrates barriers and that identification is made so transformation comes without direct prodding or pulling. Story is subversive.

**Communicates to the whole person.** It reaches more sectors of the self than just the rational. Well-narrated action always produces a dominant impression on a hearer's mind and spirit—and emotional zone. “Nothing stirs the chemistry of the consciousness and prods the self to commitment like good story preaching,” says Massey (Designing the Sermon 35).

The form for a story sermon is less clear than the advantages. Both Kalas (Lecture) and Robinson (Lecture) suggest a loose form. While Robinson looks for clarity in the form, Kalas emphasizes the need of soul from the preacher. Both emphasize the need to take into account the hearer. Kalas' and Robinson's loose form for narrative preaching consists of the following five steps:

1. Kalas begins with introducing the main idea (or need) that will be addressed by the sermon. Robinson says to begin with building a fire by starting with an interesting statement.

2. The second step for Kalas is explaining the main idea and how it relates to Scripture. Similarly, Robinson builds a bridge by surfacing a need.

3. For the third step, Kalas relates how the hearers are to act now that they know the main idea. Robinson says the third step is to share the treasure of the sermon by telling them the central idea.

4. Here, Kalas says the preacher is to explain how the hearers are to respond or act differently based on what they have learned from the sermon. Robinson's fourth step is to show the hearers specifics on how they are to respond, giving them specific ideas.

5. The final step for Kalas is to challenge the hearers to take a specific step in making a change for the good. Robinson's last step is to give the hearers something to take home by suggesting a practical, specific action that puts the idea or ideas of the sermon in use.

Mitchell suggests that an essential ingredient to narrative preaching is celebration:

Celebration is the best way to motivate people to do the will of God. Only positive truths about God through Christ give healing and empowerment causing great rejoicing and praise. The more people rejoice about the goodness and faithfulness of God, the more they establish that joyous quality or atmosphere in the psychic space of their inner lives, regardless of outer chaos. People remember a good celebration even if they forget everything else. (63)

In all the narrative forms importance is placed on the hearer while being true to the text. Narrative seeks to grab and transform the whole person. Kalas' soul preaching, Robinson's clarity, and Mitchell's celebration make for a combination that is eventful, engaging, and life changing.

### **The Problem-Solving or Creativity Paradigm Sermon**

Craddock proposes sermons are to be structured according to the same inductive process of creative discovery employed by preachers in their exegetical work rather than being shaped according to a single deductive pattern of linear logic (143). Instead of hearing in the introduction what the sermon is about, listeners ought to move through the

sermon, putting together various bits and pieces of evidence until they can discover the truth of the sermon in the conclusion. By the time the hearers arrive at the end, they ideally have become so engaged in this discovery process that they and not the preacher complete the sermon by naming its resolution in their own minds and lives.

In Craddock's view, the preacher should imagine the hearers are going to solve a specific problem and then design the sermon to give them all the necessary information in the proper order to resolve the problem for themselves (Long, Witness of Preaching 98). The problem being solved is always the question, "What does this biblical text mean for us today?"

Similar to the problem-solving method is the creativity paradigm sermon. This type of sermon uses narrative—like structure to form and communicate the sermon. Lowry uses the creativity paradigm to develop a sequence of moves or scenes which taken together form a narrative (22). Lowry suggests five scenes in this narrative, and he calls this five fold form "the homiletical plot."

The plot begins with upsetting the equilibrium. In this scene the preacher poses the problem of the sermon in a way that can be heard by the hearers. The second scene explores the problem that was posed in the first scene and articulates the reasons why the problem exists in human experience. Lowry calls this process analyzing the discrepancy. In the third scene, disclosing the clue to resolution, the preacher supplies the clue from the gospel that provides the solution for the problem. The clue disclosed in the previous scene is fleshed out in terms of its fuller meaning for the hearers in the fourth scene which Lowry calls experiencing the gospel. During this scene a reversal or a sudden and surprising moment of illumination that Lowry calls "the loop" is experienced by the hearer. This "ahaa" moment is when the hearer experiences the good news of the gospel.

Then in anticipating the consequences, this new discovery of the gospel is projected to the future.

Table 2.1 shows that Warren (Purpose Driven Church 79) and Wilson (73) propose a similar approach. Warren’s, Wilson’s, and Lowry’s forms address needs as the driving force for the structure of the sermon. Sermons that begin with an intriguing problem and move themselves toward a resolution offer high listener appeal and thus they have high potential for impact.

**Table 2.1. Warren’s, Lowry’s and Wilson’s Five-Step Problem-Solving Method**

STEP	RICK WARREN	EUGENE LOWERY	PAUL SCOTT WILSON
ONE	Establish a need	Upset the equilibrium	Present the trouble in the Bible
TWO	Give personal examples	Analyze the discrepancy	Relate to trouble in the world
THREE	Present a plan	Disclose the clue to resolution	Explain grace in the Bible
FOUR	Offer hope	Experience the gospel	Relate to grace in world
FIVE	Call for commitment	Anticipate the consequences	Make invitation for change

**The Image-Shaped Sermon**

Imagination has to do with the production of images. Images gain meaning by virtue of the narratives to which they belong. In the “image-shaped” sermon are multiple “moves” which are shaped by one single biblical image. Usually the moves are narrative-like and carry a sense of progression from one move to the other until climaxing at the last move. Moves are like a picture described by the preacher. There are three parts needed to communicate a clear picture to the hearers:

- Opening                      States the main idea of the move in one succinct sentence
- Development                The main idea is elaborated



Closure                      The main idea of the move is restated

Sermons involve a sequence of ideas. The preacher presents these sequences of ideas through the “moves” or pictures by presenting one “move” after another. A well-formed sermon will have a series of pictures that possess a lively sense of movement from one to the next and work together to produce a coherent understanding. In an image-shaped sermon the preacher looks for a sequence of ideas or pictures that describe one particular image. Three reasons why a preacher should shape around an image are the following.

**1. An image allows recognition of everyday objects.** Often illustrations are imported into sermons or are so narrowly focused that they lose impact. An image with multiple facets strengthens the impact because the image is relevant and applicable to many different situations.

**2. An image allows focus on particular aspects.** Images helps hearers to experience with reality what is going on in their lives right now.

**3. An image provides new insights.** Since images touch the imagination and the emotions, images helps hearers to perceive a desired state in the future through a reality reenvisioned in a new way. Images helps hearers to come to a new awareness.

Eslinger suggests that biblical imagery be used as the organizing form for the sermon. In this form the narrative examples must resonate with the biblical imagery and locate easily within the theological field of the biblical text (169). The core assumption is that the character of God remains consistent and the contemporary analogies to Scripture are both realistic and edifying.

### **Recovering Apostolic Vision**

The biblical precedents developed in Chapter 1 posits five definitive sections of

Scripture with themes that characterize apostolic vision. These apostolic themes form criteria used to determine apostolic vision. The following are the elements that make up the criteria for apostolic vision:

1. Making disciples,
2. Hungering for righteousness,
3. Being ambassadors of reconciliation,
4. Discipling unlikely and irredeemable people,
5. Encouraging an environment of wonder, and
6. Sustaining a healthy balance.

### **Making Disciples**

Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson states that the Great Commission as given in Matthew 28:16-20 “is a fundamental paradigm for the mission of the church” (17):

Jesus is presented as the new Teacher with authority; mission is defined as teaching “to obey everything that I have commanded you” and ... so if we are serious about taking Mathew 28:16-20 as the paradigm for mission today, our evangelization should concentrate on what we call Christian education. (19)

The mission of making disciples should be encouraging and liberating:

This vision of mission as “making disciples” should be an encouraging and liberating discovery for pastors and church leaders who are worried about evangelism and how to do it in our churches. *Christian education is already evangelism and it should be done evangelically* [emphasis mine]! It is no less than the *evangelization of each generation* [emphasis mine], learning together the way of the kingdom, in a community of disciples, at each stage in life and throughout all of the experiences of life, and in each context. Disciples are not born, they are made, and it takes a whole lifetime, with no graduation in sight. (20)

Arias and Johnson conclude that “evangelism without discipleship is not evangelism in the New Testament sense, according to the Great Commission” (20).

Jesus’ teaching is the call to put the kingdom of God as the highest priority and

Jesus mandates the disciples “to teach and to obey everything I commanded you.” He is telling the disciples that their mission is the continuation of Jesus’ own teaching mission (Arias and Johnson 22). The disciples’ mission is to build the kingdom of God.

Rhodes suggests that the Great Commission is in reality the Great *Co-mission*:

Christians are coworkers, partners together with the Lord. But that’s exactly what God is calling us to in the Great Co-mission—a joint partnership to remake the world in God’s image and according to God’s purposes: “Go ... make disciples of all nations.” God does not intend to fulfill God’s purposes for creation apart from humanity, nor does God intend the church to accomplish this mission apart from an active relationship with God. God will fulfill this mission as a joint partnership between God and God’s children. (68)

Key to developing a community of coworkers participating in making disciples is the pastor’s concept of authority. If pastors have authority as clergy, it is because laity perceive clergy to be reliable interpreters of the power and purposes of God in the context of contemporary society. This involves both spirituality and expertise, not one without the other (Carroll 154).

Realistically the model for authority depicted in Table 2.2 shows two extremes and the actual situation that the pastor works might be a mix or a hybrid of the two poles. Especially in the transitional world we live in where many decisions are based on “both and” rather than “either or” logic, authority is best exercised by trying to bridge extreme poles.

Table 2.2. Models of Pastoral Authority

FUNCTION	CENTRALIZED	TRANSITIONAL	DECENTRALIZED
AUTHORITY	Flows from top down	Situational leadership	Plural leadership
ACCOUNTABILITY	One way	Could be one way or mutual depending on the need or situation	Mutual
ROLES	Determined by relative position in hierarchy	Determined by gifts and call along with position in hierarchy	Determined by gifts and calling

Authority is based on the character of Christ, not on the position held (Ogden 142). The gift mix and call of the leadership determines the individual roles that those in authority take in church leadership. This means that authority needs to be decentralized and the laity released to do ministry. The pastor can commit spiritual abuse not to equip and release laity to do ministry, yet the lead pastor needs to take responsibility for building and cultivating vision and establishing the core values.

Developing partners for making disciples requires notice of Jesus' approach to people. Jesus saw each person as valuable in God's eyes. He took time for each person. He listened for the particular needs of each person in each situation and awakened latent possibilities in that person, not through massive programs but for the person. Jesus did not coerce anybody into discipleship or belief. He viewed human growth patiently in the context of slow-ripening time (Oden 193).

Likewise, the pastor as equipper is to watch for underdeveloped powers to draw out, to bring potency to actuality in human lives. Perhaps the clearest model of an equipping pastor's ministry is when Jethro advised Moses to break the nation into small groups. Face-to-face ministry enables God's people to learn to tend to each other and so act as the body of Christ.

As a community of faith, the church is itself the verification of the message it proclaims. The people of God need to follow Jesus Christ, letting the world know that God loves them. Snyder suggests five words to describe the apostolic witness of the people of God: chosen, pilgrim, covenant, witness, and holy (95-97).

First, God moves to *choose* and form a people for himself. Thus the pastor's first priority is to so invest himself or herself in a few other persons that they also become disciplers and ministers of Jesus Christ (Ogden 127). The pastor is to help to create an

environment where authentic Christian community develops real followers of Jesus Christ.

Second, God's people are called to live in active tension with the world. They are to be *pilgrim* people "looking for a city not made with hands," knowing that the time of final reconciliation, the end of the pilgrimage, will come.

Third, *covenant* grounds people in real history. The Bible is normative because it is the Book of the Covenant.

Fourth, followers are not only a vehicle of the gospel or fruit of the gospel; they are the good news. The church must *witness* to God's personal acts throughout history and supremely to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Finally, followers walk with the Spirit—they live differently in their relationships with one another, and are empowered to do so, because they are Spirit people. They seek to be *holy*. "Holiness especially means the Holy Spirit living in believers, reproducing the life of Christ within and among them, particular in their communal relationships" (Fee 109). The fruit of life with the Spirit is a life of joy; above all else; such joy is to characterize the Christian community. The community of God's people owes their life together as a body to their common, lavish experience of the Spirit (67). A real follower of Jesus Christ participates in the building of God's kingdom by making disciples.

### **Hungering for Righteousness**

A vital part of Jesus' teaching and mission has to do with righteousness and justice. Part of putting the kingdom and its justice as absolute priority is to hunger for righteousness (Arias and Johnson 25). Hungering for righteousness is understanding kingdom ethics as serving the neighbor in need—even loving a neighbor. What Jesus is primarily concerned about is righteousness in the kingdom; this righteousness is defined

by right relationship with God and right relationship with neighbor. Jesus' teaching on righteousness and justice provides three insights.

**Kingdom relationship with one's neighbor.** Four of the Ten Commandments deal with an individual's relationship to God while the other six deal with an individual's relationship with other people. All ten are about relationships. Jesus summarized what matters most to God in two statements: love God and love people:

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart ...” This is the first and the greatest commandment. A second is equally important: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments. (Matt. 22:37-40)

Jesus' summary of what matters most to God is called the Great Commandment, and this commandment dealing with relationships is an essential part of kingdom living.

Warren combines the Great Commission and the Great Commandment by stating that the purpose of the church can be summed up by these two commands:

I believe that every church is defined by what it is committed to, so I came up with this slogan: “A Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a Great Church....” These two passages summarize everything we do.... We are driven by the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Together, they give us the primary tasks the church is to focus on until Christ returns. (Purpose Driven Life 103)

Warren identifies five purposes that the church is organized around the Great Commandment and the Great Commission (Purpose Driven Life 107):

Purpose # 1: Love the Lord with all your heart (*worship*),

Purpose # 2: Love your neighbor as yourself (*ministry*),

Purpose # 3: Go and make disciple (*evangelism*),

Purpose #4: Baptizing them (*fellowship*), and

Purpose #5: Teaching them to obey (*discipleship*).

**Kingdom priority of righteousness.** A constant New Testament theme is that the disciple's greatest witness to the world is his or her love for one another. Jesus says, "A new command I give you: love one another. As I loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 14:33-35). In other words, Jesus' followers will be known by how they love one another. This is the picture Jesus paints in all the gospels. For example, the lawyer who asks Jesus about how he could inherit the kingdom of God is given the Great Commandment as the answer. Righteousness is right relationship with God and right relationship with one's neighbor.

**Kingdom redemption for unlikely people.** The Church is God's prophetic word and witness in the world when it stands with and for the poor:

Jesus made it plain that this is where he intends us to stand. When we serve the poor, we are not taking Christ to them; we are merely going where he already is and making him known (Matthew 25:40). Standing with the poor is both a pointer to the new age and a condemnation of the powers of the present age that are content with providing security for the rich and advice for the poor. (Snyder 135)

Hunter believes that the thought that puts priority on reaching the poor represents an ideological reading of Scripture that misses some of "the wideness of God's mercy" (Radical Outreach 45):

The Messiah, according to Matthew's Gospel, commissions his movement to make disciples *panta ta ethne* (Matthew 28:19-20), that is, among the clans, tribes, castes, ethnic peoples, and other groups of the earth. Demonstrably, Jesus did not confine his ministry to the poor and closely related groups. Jesus often reached the powerful, specifically when they saw the healing, deliverance, or transformation of the powerless. (45)

Some examples of Hunter's "wideness of God's mercy" are the following (Radical Outreach 52-8):

1. Jesus heals a centurion's paralyzed servant and commends the centurion for

his faith (Matt. 8:5-13);

2. Jesus included Matthew, a tax collector, as one of his disciples;

3. Jesus earns the reputation as “the friends of sinners,” and he said, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Matt. 9:9-13);

4. Jesus raises from death the daughter of a synagogue leader (Matt. 9:23-26)

5. Jesus offers Life to a rich young man (Matt. 19:16-28);

6. Jesus also included Simon the Zealot as one of his disciples. Zealots were first century terrorists bent on the violent overthrow of the Roman occupation (Matt. 10:4);

7. The onlookers were amazed after Jesus liberated “a man with the spirit of an unclean demon” (Luke 4:33);

8. Jesus heals a paralytic in the presence of scribes and Pharisees “so that they may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Luke 5:17-26);

9. A crowd on observing Jesus’ raising a widow’s son were seized with fear and they glorified God saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God looks favorably on his people” (Luke 7:11-17); and,

10. Jesus’ cleansing of lepers expresses *the range of his outreach* (Luke 17:11-17). Jesus’ ministry is to the powerless and the powerful; reaching out to these unlikely people demonstrate the wideness and range of God’s mercy.

### **Being Ambassadors of Reconciliation**

Peter Drucker suggests two questions for leaders of organizations to continuously ask themselves: First, what is our main business, and second, how is business? Hunter claims that the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians is the normative passage for understanding Christianity’s identity and main business:

Paul explains that, primarily, the Corinthian Christians are “ambassadors



for Christ,” that is, the authorized representatives of Christ to the peoples of Corinth and to the peoples beyond. Our main business is “the ministry of reconciliation.” God wants us to reach other people through his church. “God is making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20). It is our privilege to invite people to be reconciled to God and become followers of Jesus Christ. (Radical Outreach 27)

Emil Brunner says, “The Church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning.

Where there is no mission, there is no true church; and where there is neither church nor mission, there is no faith (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 28).” Whether a fiery passion exists depends on whether vision is present or not. My claim is apostolic vision generates the fire for a vibrant, mission-driven faith. All the components of the apostolic Christian movement that once won an empire are still in place: the gospel, the Scriptures, sacraments, sacred symbols, beliefs, worthy traditions, clergy and a gifted laity, a gathered worshipping community, hymns and prayers, and a hundred other recognizable features.

“How is business?” Drucker asks. Hunter suggests today’s Christianity needs the same insights that Paul gave the Corinthians throughout his two letters to them. These letters serve as a Great Commission manual (Radical Outreach 31). The following eight insights make up the Great Commission manual:

**1. Making sheep.** Christians cannot and must not count on specialized apostles (preachers) to reach all people. Reasons that preachers cannot reach all people include the following:

First, trained leaders are not plentiful enough to spread around;

Second, cross-cultural ministry is too difficult for only a few specialized in evangelizing to accomplish; and,

Third, today’s pastors often lack credibility for many of today’s transitional

people. Herb Miller explains this fundamental characteristic: “Evangelism is the only enterprise on earth where the amateurs outperform the professionals by two to one” (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 28). Effective outreach is accomplished when all of the “People of God” are *ambassadors for Christ*. Charles Temple claims, “The true church is the only society in the world that exists for its non-members” (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 28). Thus, characteristic of apostolic vision is that laity are equipped and empowered to reach non-members. An old saying applies for this characteristic, “Shepherds don’t make new sheep; sheep make new sheep.”

**2. Convincing witness.** The credibility of the “witnesser” is the greatest determiner in the believability of the message (Radical Outreach 32). Recent research discovered that a significant reason that converts responded was because the converts could sense that their Christians friends were connected to God (Crandall 34). Credibility, authenticity and speaking from the soul are essential for reaching non-members.

**3. Equipping and empowering laity.** Laity are not only equipped and empowered to evangelize, they are entrusted to do significant and effective ministry. Paul calls the ambassadors of Christ to a ministry of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5. This ministry of reconciliation establishes the credibility of the message, ministers to the whole person, models non verbally the beliefs of the faith community, and allows those in ministry to experience fulfillment and the abundant life in Jesus Christ.

**4. Connecting indigenous people.** Christians are called to reach indigenous people in culturally relevant ways. Indigenous ministry engages the attitudes, beliefs, and values characteristic of society. For example, Paul had to battle the Jerusalem church over not requiring Jewish customs as a litmus test for being a believer of Jesus Christ. The verdict of the Jerusalem Council affirmed Paul’s view and showed cultural flexibility and

enabled Christianity to become the world's most universal faith ( Hunter, Radical Outreach 34). Paul adapts to the local cultures “for the sake of the gospel” and admonishes those who desire to effectively communicate the gospel to do the same.

**5. Continuing process.** Evangelism is a continuing process involved in reaching and effectively communicating the gospel. One needs to know three insights about this process: (1) Evangelism requires a team, (2) a person needs time to adopt the gospel, and (3) a “chain of experiences” leads to faith. Hunter recognizes about thirty links involved in a chain (Radical Outreach 35).

**6. Multiplying opportunity.** New opportunities are continuously needed to recruit new people. Apostolic Christianity involves starting and planting new churches and groups so that new people can be recruited.

**7. Widening mission.** A wider mission that reaches peoples beyond the local community is a characteristic of apostolic vision. Local churches need to send and support their own missionaries to other peoples and to be involved in the greater mission of the church.

**8. Discipling unlikely and irredeemable people.** Jesus Christ calls the church to love and believe in, serve and reach out to, and welcome and receive the people marginalized by today's society. Christians are to be in mission to lost people who need to be found, especially those society regards as the most lost, irredeemable, and impossible (Hunter, Radical Outreach 38). Christianity is about changing losers into winners and then to deploy the winners in witness and ministry. Apostolic Christianity reaches out to irredeemable people because in part the redemption of these people reveals God power to save to all those who have eyes to see.

Paul directs the Christian church to “become all things to all people” that they

might “by all means save some.” This involves believing in and identifying with and engaging in culturally relevant outreach—not just opening the doors of the church. Apostolic Christians are ambassadors for Christ involved in the ministry of reconciliation to impossible, lost people.

Hunter identified the following criteria for appraising the faithfulness and effectiveness of a church (Radical Outreach 72):

1. Following Jesus Christ,
2. Becoming fishers of men—discipling the unlikely and the irredeemable,
3. Proclaiming the Good News to the whole creation,
4. Witnessing to the whole of creation,
5. Making disciples of all nations, and
6. Identifying with and being ambassadors of reconciliation.

### **Discipling Unlikely and Irredeemable People**

Apostolic vision is a redemptive vision. Hunter believes that this essential apostolic perspective can be clearly seen after reviewing Paul’s letters to the Corinthians. He says, “Jesus Christ calls his churches to love, believe in, serve, reach out to, welcome, and receive those people and populations that society’s establishment regards as unlikely or even hopeless, and to deploy their converts in witness and ministry” (Hunter, Radical Outreach 41). Nieman and Rogers provide insight who these unlikely and irredeemable people are in today’s society:

Important for Christians today is developing a mental image of the Church that corresponds to reality. When we think of the Church we must conjure up a picture not of people like ourselves, but people of all colors and shapes and ages, women and men speaking in different tongues, following different customs, practicing different habits, but all worshipping the same Lord. Having such a concept is important because that is the church that Jesus sees. And it’s important because that is the church that Christ has

called to represent his kingdom on earth. We do ourselves and Jesus a great disservice when we think otherwise. If our image of the Church is wrong, we also set ourselves up for poor thinking about the issues of multiculturalism. For regardless of what we conclude about the pros and cons of that particular ideology, *we ought to feel multicultural in our bones* [emphasis mine]. (63-64)

Rhodes equates a passion for the alienated to hospitality (135). Hospitality is unnatural because others are put first. The inclination is to take care of the self first and foremost. Hospitality takes a willingness to risk. Jesus reminded his disciples that even the heathens loved those who they knew would love them, welcomed those who would welcome them. Christianity does not have much to offer if practiced only to people already known and similar to themselves.

Hunter warns that a church devoid of redemptive vision may well provide good chaplaincy services to a gathered colony of conventional believers. If a conventional church does reach out, they target and respond to people who are like their members, only younger. Most conventional churches assume they cannot reach most of the other people of their community (Radical Outreach 42).

“Most of us know what true hospitality feels like,” says Rhodes. “Hospitality makes us feel worthy, because our host assumes we are worthy. This is the kind of hospitality that we have experienced from God, and all that God asks is that we go and do likewise, particularly to the alien among us” (136).

Paul writes in the second chapter of Ephesians about God’s hospitality through Jesus Christ:

Now because of Christ—dying that death, shedding that blood—you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything. The Messiah has made things up between us so that we’re now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance.... Instead of continuing with two groups of people separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind

of human being, a fresh start for everybody. Christ brought us together through his death on the Cross. The Cross got us to embrace.... Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. (Peterson 404)

### **Encouraging an Environment of Wonder**

The new covenant is about being the new people of God—not just persons of God. The new covenant promotes diversity while still being united in one Spirit. Paul writes, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28). The new covenant, or as now known, Christianity, is not a private religion but a corporate, reconciling, fellowship of brothers and sisters in the household of God. Crandall adds, “Breaking down the inherited, cultural, ethnic, boundaries and walls that divide us makes little sense to those without the Spirit of God, but in Christ we are new creatures” (59).

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:16-18)

The earliest members of the Church were drawn together on the day of Pentecost and the Spirit spoke in a multitude of languages to make a new covenant community. This new covenant community “committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers” (Peterson 242).

Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person’s need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved. (242)

The new covenant community in Acts portrayed a sense of expectancy that God will show up and do something audacious, in other words, have a sense of wonder:

Wonder is where the Holy Spirit operates and is not anyone's secure possession. Wonder is where we come as little children with expectancy and excitement that something great and glorious is going to happen. Wonder is glorifying God because we find ourselves breathless in his presence. The church is the dwelling place of wonder of biblical faith. The gospel thrives in an environment where there is wonder—where the church exists for the Kingdom. More simply the primary purpose of the church is to glorify God. (Volz 8)

This purpose is best understood in John 17 when Jesus prayed with the disciples in the Upper Room just prior to his arrest:

Father the time has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do. I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are—I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one. Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me. (John 17:1, 4, 23)

Jesus' primary purpose was to glorify God. Everything he did came from obedience to his call to let the world know that God, the Father, loved the world. In this Jesus glorified God. He then prayed that his disciples do the same. They were to glorify God so that the world knows that God loves them. The dwelling place of wonder centers on glorifying God.

Rich Nathan and Ken Wilson ask their readers to use their imagination:

Imagine a church that experiences joyful intimacy with God that regularly sees sick people healed, that tunes in to God's voice and worships with body, emotions, and Spirit, but employs the power of the Spirit not for a "spiritual buzz" but for evangelism and world missions! Imagine churches that experience powerful spiritual life, but channel that life toward the world. We call such churches empowered evangelical churches. (34)

Such churches are where the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the people of God, and the mind of Christ are the biblical dimensions that point to a dynamic, organic model of

the church that lead to an experience of church that is biblical and cross-culturally relevant (Snyder 117). The biblical faith community is where people experience the wonder of God's outpouring of love. God's outpouring of love is a life-giving experience that leaves us in awe. "We do not discuss God—he dazzles us! And we glorify him" (Nathan and Wilson 34).

The Spirit is the key to experience God's outpouring of love. For Paul the experience of the promised Spirit meant the return of God's personal presence to dwell in and among his people (Fee 182). The Spirit means the presence of great power, power to overflow with hope, power sometimes attested by signs and wonders and at other times by joy in great affliction (146). The Spirit is to be experienced—not simply part of a phrase in the creed.

### **Sustaining a Healthy Balance**

"What ... sustains a healthy church as it experiences the *koinonia* of the Spirit, incarnates the mind of Christ, and fulfills its Kingdom mission in the world as the people of God?" asks Howard Snyder (117). The church is a living organism and the key question for every organism is, "What is its ecology?" Snyder defines ecology as the healthy dynamic interplay of many parts of an organism (117). Like every organism, the church's health depends on the proper balance and functioning of the parts. Understanding the ecology of the church means discerning the key elements and how these relate to each other.

Paul paints an ecological picture of the church in 1 Corinthians 12, using the analogy of the human body. Each believer is a member of the body, and the health of the whole depends on the proper functioning and interplay of all the members. Paul says, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many,



they form one body. So it is with Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12). Ephesians 4:1-16 also pictures church ecology but the accent is on the dynamic of growing up into Christ and living from the fullness of his grace. The emphasis is on the dependence of the body on the head, Jesus Christ (Snyder 118).

Snyder’s ecological model of the New Testament church has three interrelated essential components—*worship, community and witness*:

We find the New Testament church living a life of worship, community and witness. Given the proper balance biblical and practical rhythm of worship, community and witness, the church maintains a spiritual ecological balance that keeps it lively and faithful. This provides the dynamism and health that allow it to be used dramatically in God’s larger plan of redemption. (119)

The three essential components of worship, community and witness stand out clearly in the early days of the Church:

In Acts 2:42 we read that the first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Further, we read that they shared their goods and homes with each other so that no one had need and all had a house fellowship in which to worship God and be strengthened for witness in the world. (Snyder 121)

**Worship.** The Spirit’s presence helps to build up the believing community as its members gather to worship God. The Spirit, who forms the body and creates the temple, is present with unity and diversity, so that all may participate and all may be built up (Fee 184). In other words, God’s outpouring of love builds an authentic worshipping community.

**Community.** Ogden suggests that the Church is a place where broken, struggling people can become well and whole (104). In this community the atmosphere is saturated with grace that says to those who enter, “We take you as you are. Grace is dispensed here.” Therefore, genuine Christian community provides for restoring all that bare the

damage of physical, spiritual, and emotional brokenness. Authentic community is where God's outpouring of love brings us to a relationship with the Holy God. Gordon D. Fee puts the Spirit's role in forming community best:

Crying Abba to God through the Spirit of God's Son means that the Son has restored our relationship of utter dependence on God lost in the fall; we can depend on him for everything. The experience of the Spirit leads the believer not only to a position of justification before God, but also should lead to an ongoing awareness of the privileges of childhood—personal relationship and companionship with God himself. (91)

The accent is on the informality of the church in its intense, interactive community life at the local congregation (Snyder 168). The apostolic church is seen as a charismatic organism that is a joyous community of the Holy Spirit. An authentic worshipping community celebrates because they know who God is. Their joy comes from the freedom God gives from the bondage and hopelessness of sin. Worship liberates the church for the kingdom; it celebrates what God has done, is doing, and will do.

**Witness.** The message of repentance and forgiveness has power. As Spirit-empowered people who have experienced God's outpouring of love, Christians have a passion to see that this love is carried to the world. Their mission as real followers of Jesus Christ is to reach those in need of the gospel in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways so that God's redemptive purposes are achieved.

Out of gratefulness for what God has done through his Son and the Holy Spirit and out of obedience to Jesus Christ, Christians witness to God's redemptive grace. The privilege and responsibility is for all to cultivate God's voice in order to hear the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit. "What ministry can be released if only we believe in the full empowerment of all of God's people" (Nathan and Wilson 214). The Church that believes in the full empowerment of all the people is a visible sign of the kingdom.

Christian A. Schwarz posits that harmonious interplay of eight principles leads to sustaining a healthy balance and growth (39):

1. Empowering leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christlike character and a clear sense of God's calling for leaders' lives. As this base of spiritual maturity increases, effective pastors and leaders multiply, guide, empower and equip disciples to realize their full potential in Christ and work together to accomplish God's vision.

2. The Holy Spirit gives to every Christian spiritual gifts for the building of God's kingdom. Church leaders have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the body of Christ "grows and builds itself up in love."

3. Effective ministry flows out of a passionate spirituality. Spiritual intimacy leads to a strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways. A godly vision can only be accomplished through an optimistic faith that views obstacles as opportunities and turns defeats into victories.

4. The Church is the living body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems that work together to fulfill its intended purpose. Each must be evaluated regularly to determine if it is still the best way to accomplish the intended purpose.

5. Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group but rather the shared experience of God's awesome presence.

6. Holistic small groups are disciple-making communities that endeavor to reach the unchurched, meet individual needs, develop each person according to his or her God-given gifts and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church. Like healthy body cells, holistic small groups are designed to grow and multiply.

7. Need-oriented evangelism intentionally cultivates relationships with pre-Christian people so they can become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are actively participating within the life of the church and community. Using appropriate ministries and authentic relationships, believers can guide others into the family of God.

8. Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said people would know his disciples by their love. Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian community and brings others into God's kingdom. Howard Snyder posits given the proper biblical and practical rhythm of worship, community, and witness, the church maintains a spiritual ecological balance that keeps it lively and faithful . This [spiritual ecological balance] provides the dynamism and health that allows the Church to be used dramatically in God's larger plan of redemption (Snyder 119).

### **The Importance of Vision**

The most prominent common theme that I observed from talking with leaders of great churches is the emphasis they placed on communication of vision and core values that the leadership establishes. Effective leadership builds and cultivates vision based on the organization's core values. The critical thing is communicating the vision so it becomes a shared vision.

Lesslie Newbigin provides an example that underscores the importance of visionary leadership:

In Scott's account of his tragic journey to the South Pole on one occasion

the weather conditions were such that a white haze blended with the unbroken whiteness of the snow and no horizon was visible. Wherever they looked there was simply one unbroken whiteness. There was no point on which they could direct their course as they drove their sledges forward. Before long they were coming upon their own tracks. Thinking that they were going forward, they were in fact only going around in a great circle. To solve the problem they began throwing snowballs ahead of them in the direction of true south so that they had something to fix their eyes on. (109-10)

Without some vision of the future one can not find a path in a rational way that leads towards anything significant. The journey needs to have a definable goal. Vision can be defined as a definable goal of a future state that motivates others to work towards the goal's end. If others are *not* motivated to work towards the goal's end, then the definable future state is a dream.

### **Definition of Vision**

Much has been written about vision (see Appendix C), yet three dominant thoughts emerge from literature on what vision is.

**A picture of a desired future state.** Visionary leaders dream dreams or visualize where the organization needs to go. They are so able to articulate a picture of the future that others can grasp it and see their part in helping to fulfill it (Ogden 180). While this task may be shared and developed with other key members of the organization, it remains the core responsibility of leaders and cannot be delegated. The first ingredient of leadership is a guiding vision, and effective leaders have a clear idea of what they want to do and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks. Unless they know where they are going, they cannot possibly get there. Effective leaders are transforming leaders that help people see themselves differently and identify their roles in accomplishing the dream.

**Imagination that gives inspiration and direction.** Aristotle says, "The soul never thinks without a picture" (qtd. in Weems 39). Vision implies the ability to picture

some future state and describe the state to others so they begin to share the dream (Tichy and Devanna 138). From the right brain come dreams, creativity, and intuition. Emotions and feelings are affected by vision. Without vision energy ebbs low, deadlines are missed, personal agendas surface, production falls, and people scatter. If a compelling vision is not present, or if the organization is not seeking a vision, then a vacuum is created. Lovett H. Weems, Jr., president of Saint Paul School of Theology, writes, “The result will be either no vision, or more likely, the presence of many small competing visions. In either case the result is decline” (39).

Helen Keller once was asked, “What would be worse than being born blind?” She replied, “To have sight without vision” (qtd. in Maxwell 140). Vision is not a luxury but a necessity. As an Italian sailor proverb says, “Who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock” (Nanus 19). Visionaries throb with a sense of urgency and intensity. Visionary leadership helps chart the course in the body of Christ.

**A specific picture of a desired reality.** Vision is concrete; not a wild-eyed scheme born in a vacuum. Rather, vision is a notion of what could occur and is deeply rooted in reality (Barna 31). Vision is a signpost pointing the way for all that need to understand what the organization is and where it intends to go (Nanus 9). As Galloway says, “Vision is like the banks of a river. The borders of a river give direction. They take it with power to a destination. Likewise, vision keeps us moving in the direction that God wants to take us” (Leading with Vision 9). Vision has a “yet” but “not yet” framework. Those who contribute the most toward a lofty vision remain clear on the vision and continue to inquire into current reality (Senge 212). Reality helps to shape the vision into a concrete, achievable picture of the future.

### **Birthng Vision**

Vision is composed of one part foresight, one part insight, plenty of imagination and judgment, and often, a healthy dose of chutzpah (Nanus 34). George Barna says vision comes from a burning desire to see God's will done to its fullest, and this goal requires being able to grasp the big picture, listening to visionary mentors, and surrendering their hearts to God's glory (32-33).

Galloway suggests seven steps to bringing a vision into reality (Leading with Vision 16-24):

1. *Get a clear picture* of the vision,
2. *Commit to the fulfillment* of the vision,
3. *Pray* that the vision is God's will,
4. *Concentrate on the fulfillment* of the vision,
5. *Organize to accomplish* the vision,
6. *Risk failure to gain success* of the vision, and
7. *Put into action faith* in the vision.

### **The Role of Intuition**

One of the first steps for birthing vision is to get a clear picture in the mind. Weems writes that a leader's vision comes from the wellsprings of intuition and discernment and dreaming (59). In fact, by definition, intuition and vision are directly connected (Kouzes and Posner 104). Both vision and intuition have to do with the ability to picture and to imagine:

Intuition is the bringing together of knowledge and experience to produce new insights. It is being able to fully participate in life's trial and tribulations, mentally sift through the facts or events, and apprehend what has been experienced. It is being able to distinguish successful from unsuccessful experiences and developing an understanding of that sorting

process. (105)

At my last church, I was a part of a prayer group that felt compelled to pray about purchasing more property. The property was listed at over a million dollars and thought too high for the church to consider. We had a God-inspired dream and felt compelled to pray:

After weeks of praying, we convinced the senior pastor to at least call the owner of the property but the owner was out and did not return the phone call. One afternoon the prayer group went out on the land to pray and claim it for God. While we were praying on the land, the owner of the land returned the call that had been placed weeks earlier by our senior pastor. The owner wanted to fly from Chicago to discuss the purchase of the land. Few felt it would be possible to raise the money required in the six weeks prior to Christmas! The owner could have sold it to a car wash franchise for more money but he felt compelled to sell to us. The church purchased the land for one-third the original listed cost. (Volz 6)

God speaks by the Spirit in dreams, visions, and inner promptings, yet incubating vision requires some cautions and guidelines that need to be followed (Nathan and Wilson 199).

First, the church upholds the priority of the objective revelation of the Bible. The biblical texts determine the content of the messages rather than simply including biblical references to illustrate the point.

Second, subjective revelation is taught, practiced, and reported as clearly subordinate to the Bible. When people in the church share various senses and impressions from the Spirit, explicitly understood are that these senses must be tested, sifted, and discerned. A biblical approach to subjective revelation is taught. Openness to subjective revelation is not a blank check for any and every approach to subjective revelation.

### **The Role of Personal Values**

All the literature surveyed also says that personal values help to create vision



(Weems 61; Senge 149; Nanus 34; Kouzes and Posner 213). Values are principles or standards that help people decide what is worthwhile or desirable:

The leader's values guide selection of a vision in a variety of ways. Values influence the questions you ask about possible directions. They guide the choice of information you seek to answer the questions and how the information is evaluated. They determine which possible visions you consider, what criteria you use to select among them and what measures of success you use to judge whether your organization is moving toward its vision. (Nanus 35)

Senge writes that ultimately vision is intrinsic, not relative (149). Information and values are the raw materials within a structure or framework that allows the visionary to see the big picture: a synthesis. Sometimes strong intuition drives vision. Other times values influence vision. Two leaders may be exposed to the same knowledge and experience in the sources of visioning and yet be led to different visions because of different values and different views of reality (Weems 61).

Critical to birthing a vision is the core values of the lead pastor. If the core values of the leadership and staff of the church do not match up with the lead pastor, then the church will drift without a focused vision. Conflict and divisiveness may also split the church into camps centering on the differing core values:

Core values are necessary to help people with day-to-day decision making. Purpose is very abstract. Vision is long term. People need guiding stars to navigate and make decisions day to day. But core values are only helpful if they can be translated into concrete behaviors. (Senge 225)

Leaders must always understand their own values, as well as the values and the culture prevailing in their organizations because these values determine whether a new sense of direction will be enthusiastically embraced, reluctantly accepted, or rejected as inappropriate (Nanus 52). Thus, the core values must be known and accepted from the very beginning of the lead pastor's ministry.

Vision is not examining other vision statements and saying, “That looks great! Let’s embrace that vision.” If one truly seeks God’s vision, the vision is a personal matter with God and yourself (Barna 78). A successful vision carries a tension that results from its having been created both from intuition and logical analysis (Tichy and Devanna 126). Creating vision is hard work.

### **Building a Shared Vision**

Creating vision is hard work because of the gaps between vision and reality, yet the gap is the source of creative energy. Truly creative people use the gap between vision and current reality to generate energy for change. Building vision requires this energy. A vision is not simply the content or words that describe the vision; true vision is what the vision does.

A shared vision based on intrinsic values uplifts people’s aspirations. Work becomes part of pursuing a larger purpose embodied in the organization’s mission. Shared visions are exhilarating. They create spark and excitement and common identity. The art of visionary leadership is building a shared vision from personal visions.

According to the literature reviewed, building a shared vision has three steps.

#### **Step #1: Incubating a Vision**

The Holy Spirit plants seed thoughts of dreams and visions in Christians’ minds and hearts. Paul Yonggi Cho, senior pastor of the largest church in the world, believes vision and dreams are the language of the fourth dimension, and the Holy Spirit communicates through them (44). Through visualizing and dreaming a visionary can incubate a desired future and hatch results. In other words, visionaries need to become pregnant with a dream until the dream begins to shape and affect their whole being. Cho suggests four steps to incubation.

**1. Envisioning a clear-cut objective.** Since faith is the substance of things, clear-cut things, hoped for, a clear and defined faith goal is required. A definite and specific end result needs to be envisioned. The objective should be vivid and felt emotively.

**2. Having a burning desire.** Also required are a burning desire and a willingness to see that goal accomplished. Results come from a red-hot burning desire to accomplish the clear-cut objective.

**3. Praying for assurance.** The clear-cut objective desired may not immediately happen. For Christians, this time of waiting often builds maturity and faith. God provides assurance for God-honoring visions. Prayer is vital for establishing the faith needed for the long haul.

**4. Speaking the Word.** What is pregnant in the visionary's heart will birth itself. God dwells in believers and operates in the world through the lived out lives of believers. God cooperates with believers to accomplish great things upon the believer's submission. Vital to a vision is cooperation between the visionary and God's Holy Spirit.

## **Step #2: Enrolling Others into a Vision**

Leaders commonly talk of getting people to buy into vision. "Buying into vision" suggests a sales program. Cultivating vision is not selling the vision; rather, it is enrolling people. Enrollment implies free choice, while being sold often does not. Enrollment is the process of becoming part of something by choice. What is desired is commitment. Committed describes a state of being not only enrolled but feeling responsible for making the vision happen (Senge 218). Whether one is being genuinely compliant or enrolled and committed to a vision is an important determination. Senge says, "People who are enrolled or committed truly want the vision. Genuinely compliant people accept the vision" (221). The difference between wanting and accepting make a tremendous

difference on the outcome of a shared vision.

Senge suggests four steps for enrolling others in a vision (222-23):

1. The one casting the vision must be enrolled in the vision.
2. The desired objective must not be inflated nor the challenges minimized. Any problems are not to be swept under the rug. The vision caster needs to be on the level.
3. The vision needs to be put in simple and straight forward language.
4. The vision caster remembers that true commitment requires freedom of choice and that the enlists need to be allowed to enroll.

### **Step #3: Implementing the Vision**

What the vision does is determined by who follows. Building a vision requires other people sharing the vision. Just as personal visions are pictures or images people carry in their heads and hearts, so too are shared vision pictures carried by people throughout an organization (Senge 206). Shared vision is a force in people's hearts. Shared visions derive their power from a common caring. A shared vision is one to which many people commit because it reflects their own personal vision.

Thus, effective leaders learn to share ministry by creating an environment where leaders and staff feel fully invested in the vision. Effective vision cannot be forced on the masses. Rather, vision must be placed in motion by persuasion, and it needs to be done personally. Ultimately, leaders intent on building shared visions must be willing to continually share their personal visions. They must also be prepared to ask, "Will you follow me?" This can be difficult; asking for support can make the leader feel very vulnerable (Senge 215). Implementing vision so that it is shared requires the following.

**Repeating and renewing constantly.** Vision needs to be repeated and renewed

constantly or it will diminish in meaning. As stated in Chapter 1, the vision needs to be cast often: “Every twenty-six days keeps the church going in the right direction” (Warren, Purpose Driven Church 111). Successful leaders use metaphors and figures of speech; they give examples, tell stories, and relate anecdotes; they draw word pictures; they offer quotations and recite slogans (Kouzes and Posner 134). Senge writes, “Visions spread because of a reinforcing process of increasing clarity, enthusiasm, communication, and commitment. As people talk, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits builds” (227).

**Speaking to the emotive senses.** The vision needs to be put in terms that speak to the emotive senses. No amount of isolated or pure reason can cause belief in the vision to happen. Reason may make straight the highway or prepare the path, but faith in vision invades lives through the intuitive and emotive sectors of consciousness (Mitchell 23).

Leaders will make full use of the language to communicate a shared identity and give life to visions (Kouzes and Posner 134). Senge states that an intense communication is required:

There is a burning need for people to feel part of an ennobling mission. If it is absent many will seek fulfillment only in outside interests instead of in their work. Stating a mission or purpose in words was not enough. People need visions to make the purpose more concrete and tangible. Leaders need to learn to paint pictures of the type of organization they want to be. (224)

**Being creative.** Creative tension between vision and reality is the key to being effective (Senge 226). Those who are effective hold their vision while remaining committed to the current reality:

A successful vision has a tension that’s the result of its having been created from intuition (right-brain thinking) and logical analysis (left-brain thinking). This is not an easy task. Leaders often resist right-brain activities. (Tichy and Devanna 127)

**Being connectable.** One of the deepest desires underlying shared vision is the desire to be connected to a larger purpose and to one another. The key to gaining widespread commitment to a new vision is to present the vision in such a way that people want to participate and will freely choose to do so (Nanus 135). This means connecting with people in a way that resonates with their own deepest feelings about what is right and worth doing.

**Being personable.** The leader personifies vision. Martin Luther King, Jr. says, “People cannot become devoted to Christianity until they find Christ, to democracy until they find Lincoln and Jefferson and Roosevelt. People are often led to causes and often become committed to great ideas through persons who personify those ideas” (qtd. in Nanus 138). The vision becomes a part of people, and then they start to represent the direction themselves, as well as try to keep it going. Integrity and consistency are important to any leader who seeks to be trusted; without trust a vision has little chance of being embraced by those whose commitment is essential for it to be realized.

### **Developing a Vision for Ministry**

“I think I need a bigger box!” said the anxious Chihuahua in a recent Taco Bell commercial (“A Bigger Box”). He realized his box was not big enough to capture Godzilla. The church often is accused of being boxed in with thinking that is too small. Effective leadership breaks through these barriers to achieve church growth. Being a visionary leader is thinking big enough to have an adequate sized box.

Since the right brain is the quadrant in which creativity resides, to build and cultivate a lasting vision that is biblical and relevant requires the following:

1. A personal vision of the apostolic church for people today,
2. A means of communicating effectively the personal vision to the heart and soul

of the congregation until it becomes a shared vision, and

3. A preaching plan that systematically communicates this vision using the new homiletic.

### **Preaching to Build and Cultivate Apostolic Vision**

My hypothesis is that the most effective way to stimulate the right brain is by effective preaching; preaching with soul, clarity, and imagination that stimulates the hearer's whole response. Consequently, vision is best built and cultivated by the preaching event. I have three premises.

#### **Premise #1: Preaching with Soul**

Sermons need to come holistically from the inner depths of the preacher and involve the issues of life that stir those depths in the hearers. The personal involvement of the preacher in the sermon itself is of vital importance, and involvement is best drawn from the issues that most concern and often perplex the preacher. Preaching with power is from the soul and that which comes from the preacher's depths communicates with the depths of the hearer. Preaching with soul takes in account the hearer and communicates on the soul level. The tone is conversational, allowing the hearer to enter in the sermon as a participant. Building and cultivating vision require participants that enroll and commit to the vision.

#### **Premise #2: Preaching with Clarity**

The task of organizing and structuring a sermon is not peripheral at all; it is central and vital to the impact of the sermon. A sermon structure becomes a communication strategy. One of the basic problems for the preacher is the inability to structure messages in such a way that the gospel is proclaimed clearly and meaningfully. Without a tightly structured plot in a play, the script is leaky—so it is with the sermon.

Structural problems in preaching inhibit the communication of the gospel. The biblical text influences the plot and the sermon form. Preaching apostolic vision with clarity tells the story of how the early Church became an authentic worshipping and nurturing community that witnessed to the world.

### **Premise #3: Preaching with Narrative Imagination**

Imagination through narratives, metaphors, and images constantly relocate ideas along experiential lines until those ideas evolve or break into insight. Imagination is a necessary component of all profound knowing and celebration, all remembering, realizing and anticipating, all faith, hope, and love. Both narrative imagination and vision reside primarily in the creative side of the brain. Preaching grabs the emotive consciousness that allows people to dream and visualize. For people to enroll and commit to apostolic vision, their emotions must be touched.

The pastor of a congregation needs hold together Word and Spirit, passion and patience, and openness and discernment. Effective leadership can be learned, but vision and core values flow from the soul of the leader, in the pulpit and in person. My goal is to lead with an open mind and an authentic soul.



### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

Preaching often focuses on increasing the understanding of the worship participants in hope that people will make commitments. Postmodern thought often makes commitment to truths, such as the gospel witnesses to, a challenge to accomplish. Being relevant and remaining true to the gospel will always be a challenge to the preacher. Relevant preaching in today's postmodern, transitional world needs to take in account the basic felt needs discussed previously in Chapters 1 and 2. The underlying force consistent throughout the discussion was the need to encounter God. In other words, the emotive consciousness and the feelings of worship participants need to be touched in addition to increasing understanding of the truth of the gospel. Only when people can encounter God will worship participants make commitments. The new homiletic looks to touch the affect and increase cognition by preaching with soul, clarity, and narrative imagination.

Apostolic preaching addresses the whole person—thoughts and feelings as well as commitment. How one understands apostolic vision within the context of his or her faith and what one feels about enlisting in the vision of the church in the context of worship should be indicated by how one enrolls and commits to the mission of the church. Focusing on one element (understanding, feeling, or commitment) to the exclusion of the other two promotes unhealthy growth counter to the ecological balance desired for a healthy, growing church.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes made by worship participants at Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church as a result of six sermon series (twenty-eight sermons) preached on

apostolic vision over a fifty-seven week period.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose statement of this study separates into two components: the twenty eight sermons and the outcome in the lives of those who have heard the sermons. The research questions that guided this study reflect these two components. The first research question identified the worship participants' knowledge, affect, and commitment in relation to apostolic vision prior to the sermon series. The second question focused on the changes that occurred in the participants' feelings, understandings, and commitments as they relate to apostolic vision as a result of the six sermon series. The third question examined the elements of sermon design and delivery that facilitated these changes. The fourth research question considered possible intervening or confounding variables uncontrolled by the research design.

#### **Research Question #1**

What knowledge of, affect toward, and commitment to apostolic vision does the congregation hold prior to the completion of the preaching program?

The answer to this research question provides a baseline of the congregation's experience of apostolic vision before taking the second measure, which for this study included the remaining four sermon series designed to build and cultivate an apostolic vision. The baseline helped in determining how much, if any, change will occur in the congregation's knowledge, affect, and commitment in relation to apostolic vision.

Three broad themes emerged as a result of a study of biblical texts and literature on apostolic vision. First, the witness of preaching was crucial in bringing about positive change in the hearer's faith. The enrollment and commitment of a person in the mission of the church expresses a relationship with God. One's relationship with God shapes how

one enrolls and commits to the faith community. Second, apostolic faith was best built and cultivated by an intentional, systematic preaching program that focused on the apostolic criteria presented in Chapters 1 and 2. Third, preaching with soul, clarity, and narrative imagination best built and cultivated apostolic faith. A positive response to apostolic vision expresses the emotive consciousness being touched by the preaching event. Visionary faith is perceived and formed in the creative side of the brain where the emotive consciousness also resides.

### **Research Question #2**

What changes occur in the congregation's knowledge of, affect toward, and commitment to apostolic vision subsequent to the preaching program?

The research project is built on the premise that a preaching program designed to build and cultivate a biblical, apostolic vision (independent variable) can positively impact cognitive, affective, and commitment changes made by a congregation. The twenty-eight individual sermon themes in this preaching program support the assumption that enrollment and commitment to apostolic vision is a positive emotive response to apostolic faith.

### **Research Question #3**

What elements of the sermon design and delivery assisted the congregation in experiencing, understanding, and incorporating into the life of the church and community an apostolic vision?

The preaching literature reviewed for this study highlights the need for preaching with soul, clarity, and narrative imagination. These three components strengthen the listener's cognitive, affective and commitment responses to the sermon. A scale for each of these components was developed for the two questionnaires. Responses to the

questionnaire indicate which, if any, of these components the congregation identifies as facilitating a more complete experience of apostolic vision.

#### **Research Question #4**

What other intervening variables correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's attitude toward accepting apostolic vision?

Potential intervening variables in this study could include other communication methods used to convey vision, gender, age, education and number of years involved in a church. Questions that control these variables need to be developed for the pre, mid, and post study questionnaire.

#### **Population and Sample**

The population for this study consisted of the worship participants (17 years and older) of the Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church. Since Shepherd of the Heart is a church start, the study began as soon as the number of consistent worship participants reached statistically valid proportions. Every adult selected received two questionnaires to complete and return.

#### **Methodology**

This project was an evaluative study in the quasi-experimental mode, which utilizes a two test design with a comparison group for the second test design. The worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church served as the one test group. A questionnaire was provided to the test group as soon as a statistically valid number of consistent worship participants was achieved. The questionnaire provided a baseline of the respondents' knowledge and feelings about apostolic faith as well as their involvement in the apostolic mission of the church.

The two questionnaires included items that identified elements of sermon design

and delivery that assisted them in coming to more complete experience, understanding, and enrollment in apostolic mission. The components of sermon design and delivery presented for response in the questionnaires were the same ones discussed in the homiletic portion of the literature review.

Preaching with soul, clarity, and narrative imagination touched the affect, motivated a commitment response, or created an environment where learning can more easily occur. In the two questionnaires, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the sermons were preached with soul, clarity, and narrative imagination.

Preaching on apostolic vision throughout the year was implemented as a part of the research design. The sermons in the six series were preached intermittently over a period of fifty-seven weeks. This design ensured that the congregation is systematically exposed to preaching on apostolic vision.

### **Variables**

The independent variable of this research project was the sermon series on apostolic vision. Two levels of validity were sought for the independent variable. A statistically determined sample of the sermons was reviewed by knowledgeable individuals who verified or challenged my presentation of the biblical material. This review provides a level of face validity. Content validity verified that the content of the sermons reflect all the generally accepted meanings of the concept of apostolic vision from a biblical perspective. The review of this work by the dissertation committee provided the level of expertise to verify or challenge content validity.

The three dependent variables this study measured were the core member's affective, cognitive, and commitment responses as a result of experiencing the sermons on apostolic vision. The change in affect, cognition, and commitment was measured by

the two questionnaire responses.

### Instrumentation

A researcher-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument to measure the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes of the population with respect to their experience of apostolic vision. This questionnaire was administered after the second sermon series and again at the end of the sixth series.

Twenty-six questions make up the portion of the questionnaire that measured affective, cognitive, and commitment responses. Each question falls into one of three scales: the Affect Scale, the Cognitive Scale, or the Commitment Scale. Table 3.1 displays the questions that support each scale.

**Table 3.1. Apostolic Vision Subscales**

AFFECT	COGNITION	COMMITMENT
My ideas about SOH will be listened to.	I can make a difference in my community.	I invite friends to come to SOH.
I experience God's presence during personal and corporate worship.	Becoming a real follower of Jesus Christ means that I will become a leader at SOH.	I am willing to commit to the high expectations of covenant membership.
I matter more than budgets, buildings, and traditions.	SOH believes in rooting people meaningfully in Scripture.	I am using my spiritual gifts at SOH.
I am needed to do the ministry of SOH.	Prayer is very important to SOH.	I am or will become involved in a small group.
I could call on people from SOH to help me in emergencies.	SOH has compassion for broken people.	I can state the purpose and vision of SOH.
I experience joy in coming to SOH.	The pastor cares for the members of SOH.	I can state the core values of SOH.
I get excited about inviting my non-churched friends to SOH	I understand the purpose, vision, and mission of SOH.	I want SOH to keep on growing.
There are many opportunities to encounter God at SOH.	SOH is called to reach the poor, the oppressed, and the lost	I will participate in the servant ministry of SOH.
	Everyone can do practical and simple acts to demonstrate God's love in effective ways.	I want to become involved in SOH's outreach to the non-churched.

Both questionnaires also asked respondents to indicate to what extent, if any, the design and delivery of the sermons on apostolic vision enabled their experience of apostolic vision. The respondents were asked to rate the value of each of the following sermon elements: preaching with soul, preaching with clarity, and preaching with narrative imagination. Table 3.2 displays the questions for each of these scales.

**Table 3.2. Sermon Subscales**

SOUL	CLARITY	NARRATIVE
I felt the preacher was talking with me.	I was able to follow the logic of the sermon.	The stories (images) made the sermon more meaningful.
The sermons on apostolic vision communicated that the preacher cares about my life.	I have gained new insights as a result of hearing the sermons on the apostolic church.	The stories (images) used in the sermon helped me to understand the Bible better.
The preacher had strong eye contact.	I understood how I could apply the sermon to my life.	I would prefer a sermon without stories (images).
I wish the preacher would stand behind the pulpit to deliver the sermon.	After I heard the sermon, I thought, "I can do that!"	God spoke to me through the sermons on apostolic vision.
At times, I felt the preacher's sermon and his life were not entirely consistent.	The sermon title helps me to remember the focus of the sermon.	At points the sermon made me smile, laugh or chuckle.
The sermons were preached confidently.	The sermon fit the main idea of the scripture text.	The sermons were pleasurable to hear.
The preacher seemed hesitant to preach on the purpose and mission of the church.		The sermons on apostolic vision touched my feelings and emotions.

### Data Collection

The researcher-designed questionnaire served as the primary source of data collection.

### Confidentiality and Anonymity

Safeguarding the respondent's identity and providing confidentiality is an

ethical consideration for anyone administering a questionnaire (Wiersma 431-435). I assured the respondents of confidentiality and anonymity in the cover letter that accompanied the mailing of the two survey questionnaires. These letters state that “no attempt will be made to match returned responses to individuals within the congregation.” To provide this level of anonymity, each questionnaire instructed the respondent in the creation of a personal code that he or she used when responding to both questionnaires. The respondent’s code started with the first initial of his or her mother's maiden name followed by the last four digits of the respondent’s social security number. This method of coding allowed the me to track changes in the individual respondents over time, as well as, note the composite changes for the entire congregation. The advantage of giving direction for the creation of the personal code was consistency in recording the same code each time. Whereas a completely self-created code may be forgotten by the respondent over a period of six months, this code was easily recalled and duplicated.

The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were the deciding factor in determining that the sample should be equivalent to the population. While the responses from a random sample would present an accurate picture and the confidentiality of the randomly sampled participants could be insured by the method described above, a random sample (if not clearly understood by the congregation) could leave some worship participants feeling as if they were singled out or specifically chosen for this study. With a relatively small population, the perception might also have existed that I would match responses with individuals from a sample.

### **Questionnaire Administration**

The questionnaire was mailed to the home address of all worship participants of



Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church who were 17 years old or older and attended worship at least once a month. The questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter explaining the project, assuring confidentiality, and requesting a response. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for returning the questionnaires.

The return date for the response was given in the cover letter and again on the questionnaire. The Survey Two questionnaire was mailed following the final sermon in the project. The same mailing list was used as the first survey. A comparison group estimated to about the same size as the first group was also sent the second survey.

### **Worship Attendance**

The worship attendance was tracked by having the respondents fill out a form, which was included with the mailed survey. The attendance survey sheets were used to control for the number of sermons heard by each worship attendee, allowing me to measure whether the number of sermons heard impacted the response level of the worshippers.

### **Data Analysis**

The primary statistical procedures employed in analyzing the data gathered in the survey one and two questionnaires were t-tests' and analysis of variance. Appendixes A and B show the sermon attendance sheets included in the mailings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the affective, cognitive, and behavioral changes in the worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church as a result of four sermon series (twenty-one sermons) on apostolic vision which was presented over a period of fifty seven weeks. The objective was to measure worship participants' responses to a questionnaire developed in Chapter 3. The questionnaire was based on the biblical precedents discussed in Chapter 1 and the literature researched in Chapter 2. This chapter presents the findings of the two surveys sent to the adult worship participants of a new church start—Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church located south of Houston, Texas in one of the fastest growth corridors in the nation.

Four research questions guided this study:

1. What knowledge of, affect toward, and commitment to apostolic vision does the congregation hold prior to the completion of the preaching program?
2. What changes occur in the congregation's affect toward, knowledge of, and commitment to apostolic vision subsequent to the preaching program?
3. What elements of the sermon design and delivery assisted the congregation in experiencing, understanding, and incorporating into the life of the church and community apostolic vision?
4. What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's attitude toward accepting apostolic vision?

#### **Profile of the Subjects**

The questionnaire with the Apostolic Vision and Sermon scales developed in Chapter 3 was mailed after the second sermon series and after the fourth sermon series to

all adult worship participants (over seventeen years old) who attended Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church at least once a month. A third questionnaire was not sent because nearly 75 percent of the original respondents moved out of the area shortly after their completion of the second questionnaire.

The total population for this study was sixty—nearly 58 percent of the 104 surveys sent to be completed. Eighteen subjects (30.0 percent) completed both measurements—accounting for 60 percent (36 responses) of the total population of the study. Twenty-seven subjects (45 percent) completed the first survey. Of these twenty-seven, nine did not complete the second survey. Thirty-three subjects (55.0 percent) completed the second survey; fifteen of these subjects did not complete the first survey. Of the total population of the study (60 responses), twenty were male and forty were female. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18 to 72 years; the average age was 45 years old. The number of months that the respondents had attended ranged from a little under three months to nearly eighteen months; nine months was the mean (see also Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1. Demographic Information for Subjects of Research Study**

	CASE NUMBER				
CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	SUM
AGE					
18 ≤ 33	2	2	7	9	20
34 ≤ 47	4	4	5	9	22
48 ≤ 54	7	6	10	8	31
55–	5	6	5	7	23
TOTAL	18	18	27	33	96
GENDER					
MALE	5	5	8	12	30
FEMALE	13	13	19	21	66
TOTAL	18	27	21	66	96
MONTHS ATTENDED					
0 ≤ 4	9	0	13	2	24
5 ≤ 8	4	0	7	4	15
9 ≤ 12	5	2	7	11	25
13–	0	16	0	16	32
TOTAL	18	18	27	33	96

Case 1 = Survey One Subjects Who Responded To Both Surveys

Case 2 = Survey Two Subjects Who Responded To Both Surveys

Case 3 = Survey One subjects who did not respond to Survey Two

Case 4 = Survey Two subjects who did not respond to Survey One

### **Reliability**

The questionnaire (see Appendixes A, B, and C) used for this study was a researcher-designed instrument made up of six scales. These scales were developed based on the biblical precedents in Chapter 1 and research on the selected readings reported in Chapter 2. Questions #4-#30 form the Apostolic Vision scale. The Apostolic vision scale is the composite of three subscales: Affect, Cognitive, and Commitment. The Sermon scale in the designed questionnaire (#31-#52) also consisted of three subscales: Soul, Clarity and Narrative.

Respondents rated each questionnaire item on a five point Likert scale.

Negatively worded items were reverse scored to correspond with the positively worded items in the appropriate scale. Each scale item was tested for reliability. The stability of each item remained constant over the two measures at the .7 level or higher. Kuder-Richardson internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha$ ) for the composite apostolic vision scale ranged from .94 on the first questionnaire to .91 on the second questionnaire. For those who filled out only one questionnaire (Groups 3 and 4), the internal consistency was .87. Table 4.2 presents the internal consistency reliability for each of the individual scales used in the instrument.

The internal consistency reliability is acceptable at  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  for all the scales and sub-scales except Soul,  $\alpha = 0.578$ . This marginal score reports that the seven Soul subscale items do not measure the same construct, thus weakening the reliability of the scale. Reliability coefficients vary between .00 to 1.00, with 1.00 indicating perfect reliability and .00 indicating no reliability. The high scores across the two measures for the Sermon composite scale and the remaining subscales means that the subscales items do reliably measure the same construct, thus negating the effect of the marginal score for the Soul subscale. Both the Apostolic vision and Sermon scales have a high reliability.

**Table 4.2. Internal Consistency Reliability for Apostolic Vision and Sermon Scales**

SUBSCALE	$\alpha$
APOSTOLIC VISION SCALE	
AFFECT	.764
COGNITIVE	.730
COMMITMENT	.889
COMPOSITE	.925
SERMON SCALE	
SOUL	.578
CLARITY	.756
NARRATIVE	.774
COMPOSITE	.860

### Descriptive Data

The descriptive data or summary statistics provide a baseline reading of the subject's feelings, knowledge, and behavior with regard to apostolic vision after each treatment (two sermon series in three months). These statistics help to answer research question one: What affect, cognitive, and commitment to apostolic vision does the congregation hold prior to the completion of the preaching program?

On the first questionnaire (n= 27), the subjects scored 4.50 on a Likert scale ranging from 1.0 to 5.0 on the composite Apostolic vision scale. The affect subscale was 4.63, the cognitive subscale was 4.66, and the commitment subscale was 4.24. The data indicates that the subjects participating in this study approach the topic of incorporating apostolic vision in their church positively. The composite scale score indicates that 90 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the questions asked on apostolic vision that were contained in the questionnaire. When considering the total population of 60 subjects, the composite mean score increases to 4.59; thus making the positive response of *strongly agree* increase to 92 percent.

**Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for Apostolic Vision Subscales**

STATISTIC	CASE 1	CASE 2	CASE 3	CASE 4
AFFECT SUBSCALE				
MEAN	4.715	4.715	4.609	4.720
SE	.086	.069	.071	.060
SD	.353	.285	.374	.300
VAR	.124	.081	.140	.090
SUM	80.200	80.200	129.100	132.100
COUNT	17.000	17.000	28.000	28.000
COGNITIVE SUBSCALE				
MEAN	4.730	4.806	4.654	4.793
SE	.070	.058	.053	.050
SD	.290	.241	.281	.265
VAR	.080	.058	.079	.070
SUM	80.400	81.700	130.300	134.200
COUNT	17.000	17.000	28.000	28.000
COMMITMENT SUBSCALE				
MEAN	4.314	4.523	4.203	4.480
SE	.152	.098	.170	.080
SD	.626	.404	.582	.400
VAR	.392	.164	.339	.160
SUM	73.300	76.900	117.700	125.500
COUNT	17.000	17.000	28.000	28.000
COMPOSITE SUBSCALE				
MEAN	4.580	4.682	4.479	4.664
SE	.100	.065	.071	.053
SD	.410	.268	.374	.280
VAR	.170	.072	.140	.079
SUM	77.800	79.600	125.400	130.600
COUNT	17.000	17.000	28.000	28.000

The preacher's effectiveness in building and cultivating apostolic vision was measured by the Sermon scale in both questionnaires. The first questionnaire as shown in Table 4.3 scored the baseline reading for the composite Sermon scale at 4.67. The subscale scores were 4.65, 4.65, and 4.72 for the Soul, Clarity, and Narrative subscales

respectively. These scores were registered on a Likert scale that ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The mean response for each of the Sermon subscales falls above the mid-point between 5 (strongly agree) and 4 (agree). At the outset, a highly positive response is made in relation to the preacher's ability to effectively communicate the apostolic vision measured by the Sermon scale and the Soul, Clarity, and Narrative subscales. Another indication of the respondents' belief in the effectiveness of their preacher's ability to communicate through the sermon, is that the composite Sermon scale score of 4.67 equates to a percentage of 94 percent. Thus 94 percent *strongly agreed* with the statements on the questionnaire.

### **Changes in Apostolic Vision Subscales**

Subject scores on Survey 2 of the Apostolic Vision scale (see Table 4.4) increased from the first measure from Survey 1. The composite mean score changed from 4.50 to 4.66 ( $p \leq 0.072$ ). Levene's test for equality of variance and t-test for equality of means were used to determine the changes across the two measures. While the change ( $\Delta$ ) for all respondents was 0.16 ( $p \leq 0.072$ ,  $n=60$ ), the change for respondents who completed both surveys ( $n=18$ ) was 0.08 ( $p \leq 0.521$ ). This observed change was not statistically significant. Nevertheless, when grouped by number of sermons heard the change became significant ( $\Delta_{\text{Mean}} = 0.18$ ,  $p \leq 0.043$ ). The observed change was even more apparent when the Commitment sub-scale was reviewed ( $\Delta_{\text{Mean}} = 0.3346$ ,  $p \leq 0.012$ ).



**Table 4.4. Apostolic Vision Scale: t-Test Paired Two Sample for Means**

	MEAN	VAR	N	$\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$	DF	T <sub>stat</sub>	SIG <sub>one tailed</sub>	T <sub>critical*</sub>	SIG <sub>two tailed</sub>	T <sub>critical**</sub>
<b>AFFECT SUBSCALE</b>										
CASE 1	4.72	.124	17	.000	16	.000	.500	1.746	1.000	.000
CASE 2	4.72	.081	17							
CASE 3	4.61	.140	28	-.107	27	-1.366	.092	1.703	.180	.000
CASE 4	4.72	.088	28							
<b>COGNITIVE SUBSCALE</b>										
CASE 1	4.73	.083	17	-.076	16	-1.437	.085	1.746	.170	2.120
CASE 2	4.81	.058	17							
CASE 3	4.65	.079	28	-.139	27	-2.849	.004	1.703	.008 <sup>a</sup>	2.052
CASE 4	4.79	.070	28							
<b>COMMITMENT SUBSCALE</b>										
CASE 1	4.31	.392	17	-.209	16	-1.851	.041	1.746	.083	2.120
CASE 2	4.52	.164	17							
CASE 3	4.20	.339	28	-.278	27	-2.901	.004	1.703	.007 <sup>a</sup>	2.052
CASE 4	4.48	.163	28							
<b>COMPOSITE SUBSCALE</b>										
CASE 1	4.58	.170	17	-.107	16	-1.480	.079	1.746	.158	2.120
CASE 2	4.68	.072	17							
CASE 3	4.48	.140	28	-.185	27	-2.892	.004	1.703	.007 <sup>a</sup>	2.050
CASE 4	4.66	.079	28							

<sup>a</sup> statistically significant**Affect Subscale**

The change in the mean score ( $\Delta_{\text{Mean}}$ ) between the two measures on the Affect subscale was 0.095 ( $p \leq 0.277$ ), indicating only a minor change. The standard deviation (SD) decreased by 0.093. The change for the Affect subscale did become statistically significant when grouped by number of sermons heard.

**Cognitive Subscale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{Mean}}$  for the Cognitive subscale of 0.129 approached statistical significance

at  $p \leq 0.072$ . The SD slightly changed by 0.027. The Cognitive subscale change score also was significant when grouped by the number of sermons heard.

### **Commitment Subscale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{Mean}}$  for the Commitment subscale was 0.223; although not statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.098$  the SD decreased by 0.080. The Commitment subscale had the most significant change when grouped by number of sermons heard.

### **Composite Subscale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{Mean}}$  for the Composite subscale was 0.158 ( $p < 0.072$ ). The standard deviation decreased by 0.062.

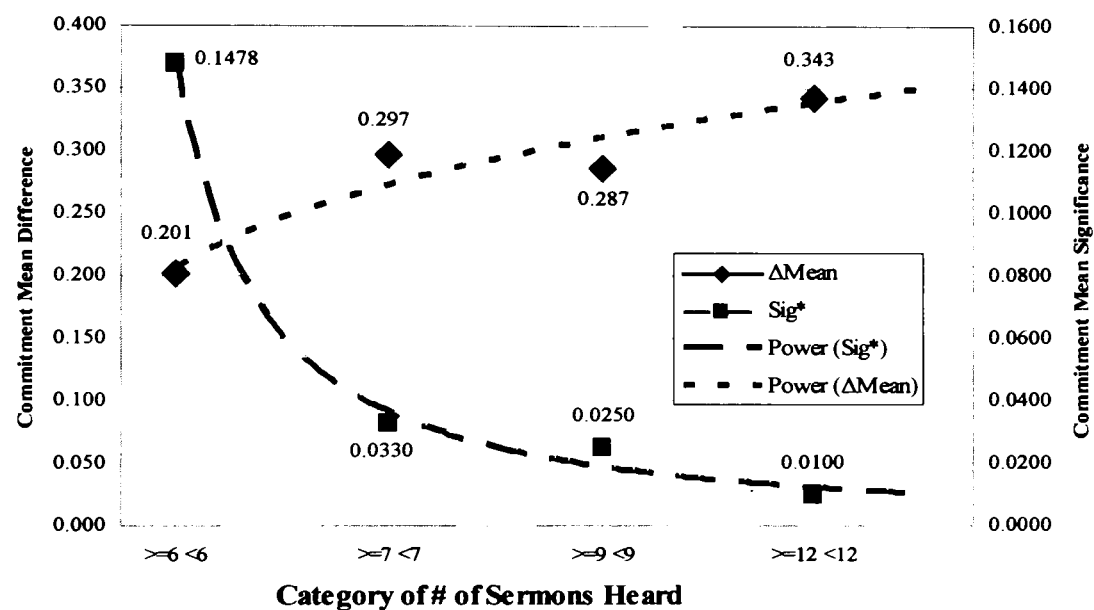
### **Sermon Attendance**

Analysis of variance tests were used to determine if some sermons impacted subject response more than other sermons. No significant differences were found. Rather the number of sermons heard was the important factor (see Figure 4.1). The Commitment subscale had the most significant change scores as seen in Table 4.5. The change score became significant after the subjects had heard seven sermons. The Sermon scale showed significance after nine sermons were heard. Also the change score became significant for the number of months attended after nine months.

**Table 4.5. Commitment Subscale: Independent Samples Test for Number of Sermons Heard**

SER HRD	N	MEAN	$\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$	SIG two tailed
$\geq 6$	38	4.439	.201	.147
$< 6$	22	4.237		
$\geq 7$	34	4.494	.297	.033 <sup>a</sup>
$< 7$	26	4.197		
$\geq 9$	27	4.523	.287	.025 <sup>a</sup>
$< 9$	33	4.236		
$\geq 12$	15	4.622	.343	.010 <sup>a</sup>
$< 12$	45	4.279		

<sup>a</sup>Statistical significance



**Figure 4.1.  $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$  and significance for commitment subscale grouped by number of sermons heard.**

### Changes in the Sermon Scale and Subscales

The change score ( $\Delta_{\text{Mean}}$ ) for the Sermon scale and subscales were not statistically significant; the standard deviation (SD) changed less than 0.075 for the subscales and most noteworthy the composite scale changed only by 0.029 (see Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6. Descriptive Statistics for Sermon Scale**

STAT.	MEAN	SE	SD	VAR	SUM
CASE 1 (N=17)					
SOUL	4.660	.074	.300	.090	79.03
CLARITY	4.685	.077	.318	.101	79.33
NARRATIVE	4.729	.070	.282	.080	80.28
COMPOSITE	4.692	.062	.254	.065	79.53
CASE 2 (N=17)					
SOUL	4.639	.070	.289	.084	78.91
CLARITY	4.611	.090	.371	.138	78.99
NARRATIVE	4.701	.074	.306	.094	80.52
COMPOSITE	4.654	.066	.274	.075	79.48

Although the change is not significant over the two measures for the Sermon scale, there is significant change in Sermon scale and subscale when grouped by worship attendance (see Table 4.7). Significant change was also seen in the composite Sermon scale ( $p \leq 0.020$ ) when respondents had heard nine sermons or more when compared to those who had heard less than nine sermons.

**Table 4.7. Sermon Scales: Independent Samples Test for Number of Sermons Heard**

SUBSCALE	SER HRD	N	MEAN	SD	SE	F	SIG <sup>one</sup> tailed	T	DF	SIG <sup>two</sup> tailed	$\Delta$ MEAN	SE $\Delta$
COMPOSITE	$\geq 9$	24	4.74	.236	.048	.006	.936	2.47	32	.019 <sup>a</sup>	.226	.092
	$< 9$	10	4.52	.263	.083							
SOUL	$\geq 9$	24	4.73	.231	.047	1.344	.255	3.18	32	.003 <sup>a</sup>	.309	.097
	$< 9$	10	4.43	.318	.101							
CLARITY	$\geq 9$	24	4.72	.313	.064	.922	.344	1.58	32	.123	.199	.125
	$< 9$	10	4.52	.380	.120							
NARRATIVE	$\geq 9$	24	4.78	.283	.058	.079	.781	1.51	32	.140	.164	.108
	$< 9$	10	4.61	.297	.094							

<sup>a</sup> statistically significant

### **Soul Subscale**

The change score ( $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$ ) for the Soul subscale was .021 ( $p < 0.831$ ). The standard deviation decreased by 0.029. The change score for the Soul scale in Table 4.5 was significant ( $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}} = 0.255$ ,  $p \leq 0.010$ ).

### **Clarity Subscale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$  for the Clarity subscale was 0.074 ( $p < 0.537$ ). The standard deviation increased by 0.074.

### **Narrative/Imagination Subscale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$  for the Narrative sub-scale was 0.028 ( $p < 0.788$ ). The standard deviation increased by 0.048.

### **Composite Scale**

The  $\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$  for the Sermon composite scale was 0.038 ( $p \leq 0.675$ ). The standard deviation increased by 0.029. The change score for the Composite scale was significant when respondents were grouped by worship attendance.

### **Regression Analysis for Apostolic Vision Scale**

Table 4.8 summarizes the step-wise regression analysis where the composite Apostolic vision scale was used as the dependent variable or criterion variable. The three subscales (Affect, Cognitive, and Commitment) were used as the predictor variables. Of the three sermon scales, the Affect subscale was the first subscale used in the regression ( $R = 0.874$ ,  $R^2 = 0.760$ ,  $f = 187.702$ ,  $p = .0000$ ) showing 76.0 percent variance in relation to the composite scale. The Cognitive sub-scale accounted for an additional 12.3 percent and the Commitment subscale accounted for 10.9 percent. The remaining variance of .8 percent was not significant. The three Apostolic vision subscales account for 99.2 percent of the variation in the composite scale (the

dependent variable). This supports the earlier finding of the high score of 92.5 percent for the internal consistency reliability for the Apostolic Vision composite scale. The high score on the internal consistency reliability suggests that the step-wise regression not only pertains to the Commitment subscale, but to the Affect and Cognitive subscales as well.

**Table 4.8. Regression Analysis Model Summary for Apostolic Vision Scale**

MODEL	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ADJ. R <sup>2</sup>	SE EST	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	F Δ	DF1	DF2	SIG. F Δ
STEP1	.874 <sup>a</sup>	.764	.760	.166	.764	187.7	1.0	58.0	.000
STEP 2	.942 <sup>b</sup>	.887	.883	.116	.123	62.2	1.0	57.0	.000
STEP 3	.996 <sup>c</sup>	.993	.992	.030	.105	794.3	1.0	56.0	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Affect Subscale Mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), Affect Subscale Mean, Cognitive Subscale Mean

c. Predictors: (Constant), Affect Subscale Mean, Cognitive Subscale Mean, Commitment Subscale Mean

d. Dependent Variable: Composite Apostolic Scale Mean

### Intervening Variables

Findings were examined to determine if the intervening variables of gender, age, and number of months attending Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church. Neither gender nor age had any significant effect that could account for differences across the two measures. The the number of months attended nearly matched the number of sermons heard in significance (see Table 4.9). In other words, respondents who attended SOH the longest generally were the same ones who had heard the most sermons. Thus, the number of months attending did not intervene in biasing the results. Rather the number of months attended is related to the number of sermons heard.

**Table 4.9. Apostolic Vision Scale: Independent Samples Test for Number of Months Attended**

SUBSCALE	MEANS FOR MONTHS ATTENDED					
	0 <= 4	5 <= 8	9 <= 12	13+		
N=	14	11	18	15		
AFFECT	4.661	4.610	4.700	4.760		
COGNITIVE	4.693	4.610	4.772	4.820		
COMMITMENT	4.262	4.101	4.593	4.504		
COMPOSITE	4.534	4.438	4.690	4.694		

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST FOR MONTHS ATTENDED						
FOR 0<9 (N = 25) COMPARED TO => 9 (N=33)						
SUBSCALE	F	SIG.	T	DF	SIG <sup>two</sup> tailed	$\Delta_{\text{MEAN}}$
AFFECT	.163	.688	.862	58	.392	.0749
COGNITIVE	.023	.880	1.810	58	.075	.1276
COMMITMENT	2.768	.102	2.606	58	.012 <sup>a</sup>	.3346
COMPOSITE	0.61	.437	2.065	58	.043 <sup>a</sup>	.1776

<sup>a</sup>statistically significant

Other possible intervening variables such as meeting in small groups or hearing about apostolic vision does not account for the change that happened upon hearing seven to nine sermons on apostolic vision. Small groups did not become an important part of the church's life until after the second survey. The primary way apostolic vision was communicated was by the preaching event.

### Summary of Significant Findings

Significant, positive change was observed on the Apostolic Vision scale, this change was observed between the two measures when the subjects' responses were grouped by the number of sermons heard and the number of months attended.

Which sermons subjects heard was not as important as how many sermons were heard. Those who heard more sermons scored significantly higher on the Apostolic vision scale.

Of the three Apostolic vision subscales, Commitment showed the most difference between the two measures.

The Sermon subscales of Soul, Clarity, and Narrative were each received as valuable elements in effectively communicating apostolic vision.

Subjects registered high scores on all three of the Sermon subscales, but when grouped by number of sermons heard or number of months attended, a statistical significance was observed.

The intervening variables of gender, age, and participation in small groups do not account for or help explain the observed changes.

The questionnaires using the Apostolic Vision scale does provide an effective way to measure change in feelings, knowledge, and behavior of worship participants.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Without a vision, the people perish; without apostolic vision, the Church perishes. Apostolic vision generates the passion and drive for vibrant, mission-driven faith. Emil Brunner identifies the connection between mission and faith by explaining the struggle of faith in many churches: “Where there is no mission, there is no true church; and where there is neither church nor mission, there is no faith. The Church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning” (qtd. in Hunter, Radical Outreach 28). Apostolic vision is what generates the fire for vibrant, mission-driven faith.

Apostolic vision consists of six essential building blocks or components:

1. Making disciples,
2. Hungering for righteousness,
3. Being ambassadors of reconciliation,
4. Discipling unlikely and irredeemable people,
5. Encouraging an environment of wonder, and
6. Sustaining a healthy balance.

Vibrant mission-driven faith places emphasis on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and how God’s people carry forth proactively Jesus Christ’s work of reconciliation. Believers in Christ are ambassadors of the gospel fully approved by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be God’s representatives of reconciliation.

“When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” asks Jesus in Luke 18:8. Jesus’ inference is that God’s people will be appraised by their faithfulness and effectiveness in carrying forth Jesus’ mandate of making disciples of all peoples. Consequently, Jesus’ question is valid for the church today. Hunter suggests five

evaluative criteria for measuring the church's effectiveness (Radical Outreach 187):

1. Whether the Church wants to know people not like them and invite them to follow Jesus Christ and become fishers of men and women (Mark 1:17);
2. Whether the Church is willing to go where nonchurched people are and commission believers to proclaim and take the Good News wherever the nonchurched reside (Mark 16:5);
3. Whether the Church is willing to spend time with the nonchurched and to witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) because all people matter to God;
4. Whether the Church welcomes culturally different people and encourages all believers to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:19); and,
5. Whether the Church empowers those culturally different to be full participants in the life of the church through being ambassadors of a reconciling God who appeals to all peoples (2 Cor. 5:20).

Faithfulness and effectiveness are equated to telling others the Good News of the gospel. The gospel is the only thing we have to offer that the world does not already have (Hunter, Radical Outreach 175). Simply put, apostolic vision witnesses to others by *those who know telling others that do not know*. Whether apostolic vision can be built and cultivated effectively from the pulpit is the question that this research study seeks to answer.

### **Summary of the Research Method**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in the worship participants of Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church (SOH) as a result of six sermon series (twenty-eight sermons) on apostolic vision which was presented over a period of fifty-seven weeks. A questionnaire

presented in Chapter 3 obtained data from the subjects over two measures—the first after the preaching program started and the second after the preaching program was completed. The questionnaire was based on the biblical precedents discussed in Chapter 1 and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 also presented the method the research study used to obtain the data from the subjects. Chapter 4 presented the findings of the two questionnaires. The remaining part of this chapter presents the conclusions about the findings of the study as well as make some recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Three hypotheses were presented, discussed, and evaluated by this research study:

1. Clarity, narrative imagination, and soul from the preacher results in positive affective, cognitive, and commitment changes from worship participants;
2. An intentional, systematic method of preaching apostolic vision results in measurable affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants; and,
3. Preaching apostolic vision results in significant affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants.

For an evaluative, quasi-experimental mode study, the hypotheses usually are framed as null hypotheses. A null hypothesis is a negative form of the hypothesis; a statement that the differences occurred because of chance. The research study determines if the null hypothesis is rejected or accepted. Consequently, the three hypotheses stated as the null hypothesis are the following:

1. The absence of clarity, narrative imagination, and soul from the preacher results in minimal affective, cognitive, and commitment changes for worship participants;
2. The absence of an intentional, systematic method of preaching about apostolic vision results in statistically insignificant affective, cognitive, and commitment changes

in worship participants; and,

3. The absence of apostolic influences on preaching about vision results in insignificant affective, cognitive, and commitment changes in worship participants.

Four research questions helped to determine whether these three hypotheses are to be accepted or rejected:

1. What affect toward, knowledge of, and commitment to apostolic vision does the congregation hold prior to the completion of the preaching program?

2. What changes occur in the congregation's affect toward, knowledge of, and commitment to apostolic vision subsequent to the preaching program?

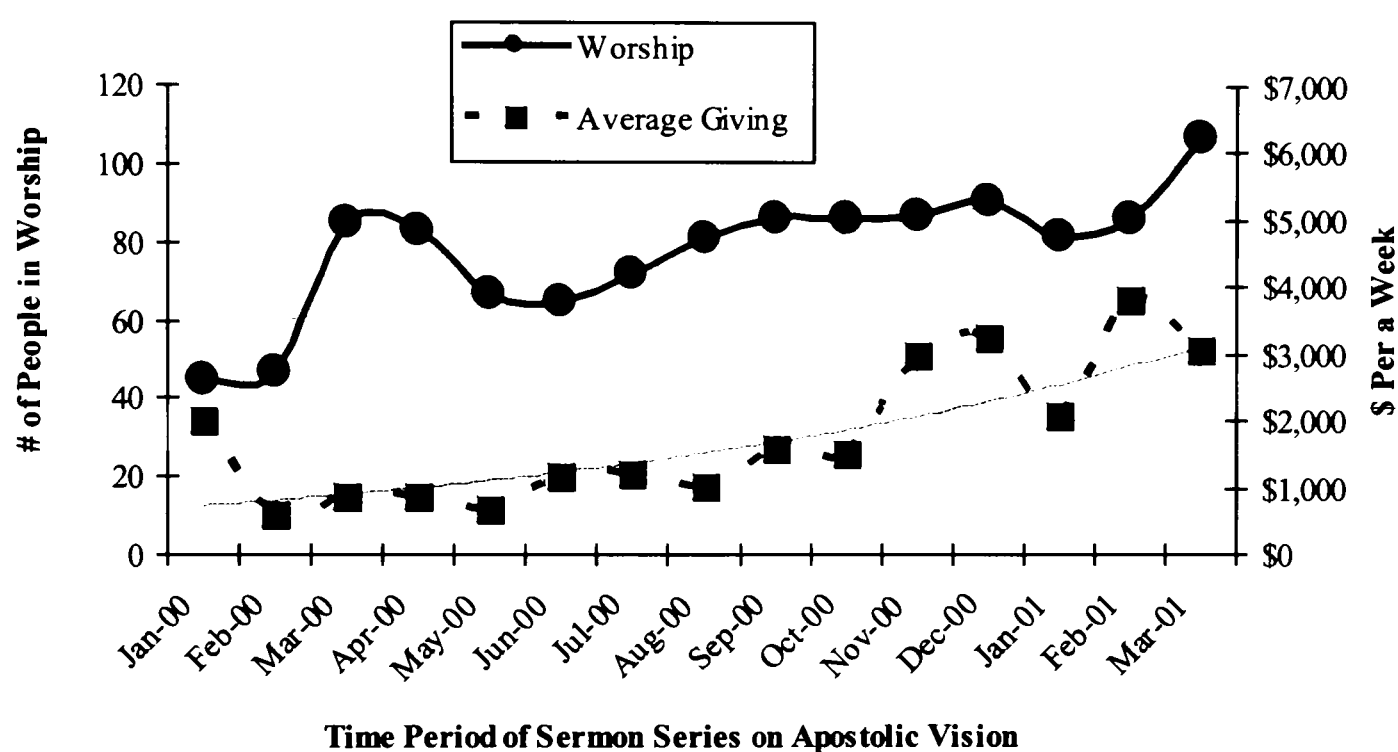
3. What elements of the sermon design and delivery assisted the congregation in experiencing, understanding, and incorporating into the life of the church and community apostolic vision?

4. What other intervening variables might correlate with the observed changes in the congregation's attitude toward accepting apostolic vision?

### **Change in Congregant's Response**

Statistically significant change was seen for the Commitment and Cognitive subscales when grouped by sermons heard or months attended. The Affect subscale did not show statistically significant change for any grouping. Previous research by Stacy R. Minger using a similar method of research for evaluating stewardship whole-person response concluded that the affect changes prior to seeing a behavioral response (115). For Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church (SOH) worship participants, the Affect subscale was consistently high throughout the preaching program. Minger's study was for an established congregation while my research was on a church start. A likely explanation that my research did not replicate Minger's study is that a church start

inherently has a mood of excitement. Being part of a new venture generates excitement so that the affect is already touched. Consequently, there already exists a climate open to change; the congregants need only to understand what they need to do. Thus, the Cognitive subscale for SOH shows change prior to the Affect subscale. Established congregations most likely already know what they need to do but are not excited about doing what it takes.



**Figure 5.1. Shepherd of the Heart United Methodist Church worship and giving patterns during research study.**

This research study conclusively demonstrated apostolic vision was communicated effectively from the pulpit. Statistics applied to the project's research data validate that as the subjects heard more sermons they changed their commitment level. Other indicators such as giving, worship participation growth, and participation in the small group ministry significantly increased during the course of the study (see Figure 5.1). Some growth in commitment is expected in a church start, but not to the levels

experienced. For example, weekly financial giving increased from around \$20 per a worshipper to \$45 a worshipper. A new growing church typically expects that the giving per worshipper to decrease with growth. Small group participation also increased—from 10 percent participation to nearly 65 percent participation.

### **Conclusions**

The questionnaires using the Apostolic Vision scale does provide an effective way to measure change in feelings, knowledge, and behavior of worship participants. Significant, positive change was observed on the Apostolic Vision scale across the two measures when the subjects' responses were grouped by the number of sermons heard and the number of months attended. Which sermons subjects heard was not as important as how many sermons were heard. Those who heard more sermons scored significantly higher on the Apostolic vision scale. Of the three Apostolic vision sub-scales, Commitment showed the most difference between the two measures.

The Sermon subscales of Soul, Clarity, and Narrative were each received as valuable elements in effectively communicating apostolic vision. Although subjects registered high scores on all three of the Sermon subscales, there was a statistical significance when grouped by number of sermons heard or number of months attended. The intervening variables of gender, age, and participation in small groups do not account for or help explain the observed changes.

The data indicates that the subjects participating in this study approach the topic of incorporating apostolic vision in their church positively. The composite scale score indicates that 90 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the questions asked on apostolic vision that were contained in the questionnaire. If you look at the total population of 60 subjects, the composite mean score increases to 4.59; thus making the

positive response of *strongly agree* increase to 92 percent.

### **Implications of Findings and Practical Application**

The practical implications of these findings are that (1) the preacher can use a grid to layout his or her sermons so that apostolic vision is effectively communicated to the congregation, and (2) the preacher can intentionally move or transition a congregation to become mission-driven and outwardly focused. For this research study, Table 5.1 shows what the apostolic vision grid would look for the thirty sermons used in this research study.

I moved to another congregation in June 2003. The apostolic vision grid developed from this research is being used in sermon planning. My new congregation was in a survival mode and had a ten-year decline until 2004. The decline has changed—a net growth of nearly thirty members in eighteen months, a new preschool started September 2004, and giving increased by 30 percent.

Preaching apostolic vision works. God honors his promises to those who are faithful to his mandates. Building and cultivating apostolic vision is not just something that should be done to improve the growth of the Church. Rather apostolic vision is the heart of the gospel and identifies who Christians are in Christ and what the Church's main business is about: (1) making disciples, (2) hungering for righteousness, (3) being ambassadors of reconciliation, (4) discipling unlikely and irredeemable people, (5) encouraging an environment of wonder, and (6) sustaining a healthy balance. The implications of this research is that a tool can be used in the preacher's planning that is biblical, proven, and user-friendly.

**Table 5.1. Application of Apostolic Vision Criteria to Sermon Planning**

SURVEY	SERMON TITLE	SCRIPTURE	SERMON SERIES
<b>1. Making Disciples</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>Teamwork Works</i>	Nehemiah 3, 4	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>There's Always a Way Home</i>	Luke 24	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Share the Living Water</i>	John 13:1-21	Living Water
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Taking Meaningful Risks</i>	Luke 19:1-10	Life... Who's Winning?
<i>Two</i>	<i>Investing in Tomorrow</i>	Jeremiah 22	Great Expectations
<b>2. Hungering for Righteousness</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>Stay the Course</i>	Nehemiah 4	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>New Eyes—New Vision</i>	Acts 9	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Step Into the Water</i>	John 3:1-9	Living Water
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Living Successfully</i>	Acts 10:1-8	Life... Who's Winning?
<i>Two</i>	<i>The Voice of the Shepherd</i>	Psalms 23	The Heart of the Shepherd
<b>3. Being Ambassadors of Reconciliation</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>Partners for the Journey</i>	Nehemiah 2	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>The Real Thing</i>	Acts 6	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Finding Calm Waters</i>	John 5:2-16	Living Water
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Finding Strength that Lasts</i>	Judges 14:1-14	Life... Who's Winning?
<i>Two</i>	<i>Living a Life of Purpose</i>	Jeremiah 8	Great Expectations
<b>4. Discipling Unlikely and Irredeemable People</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>Expanding the Vision</i>	Nehemiah 5	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>Reaching Out</i>	Acts 10	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Are You Really Thirsty</i>	John 4:7-30	Living Water
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Building Relationships</i>	John 12:1-8	Life... Who's Winning?
<i>Two</i>	<i>You Matter to God</i>	Jeremiah 1	Great Expectations
<b>5. Encouraging an Environment of Wonder</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>A Sense of Destiny</i>	Nehemiah 1	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>A Day of Applause</i>	Luke 19	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Taste the Living Water</i>	John 2:1-11	Living Water
<i>Two</i>	<i>Rich With Possibilities</i>	Jeremiah 18	Great Expectations
<b>6. Sustaining a Healthy Balance</b>			
<i>One</i>	<i>Crossing the Finish Line</i>	Nehemiah 6	The Right Stuff
<i>One</i>	<i>Meet God</i>	Acts 2	The New Morning
<i>Interval</i>	<i>Overcoming Stress</i>	2 Corinthians 4:1-18	Life... Who's Winning?
<i>Two</i>	<i>It Is Well With My Soul</i>	Psalms 23	The Heart of the Shepherd



### **Weaknesses of the Study**

This study could have been strengthened in three ways:

1. A pretest survey needed to be administered before beginning the preaching program on apostolic vision. The church start required that I began the preaching program prior to having statistically number of subjects for the research study.

2. Commentary and impressions from a post-test focus group was needed after the last preaching program. Nearly two-thirds of the original subjects tested with survey one moved away before a third sample could be taken and before a focus group could be formed to discuss the effectiveness of the preaching program. I was surprised that even with these weaknesses that the research data showed a statistical difference in the mean scores.

3. Another enhancement to the study would have been to strengthen the construct of Sermon scale. The Soul subscale was on the borderline of being too low. More questions most likely would have improved the internal reliability construct for the Soul subscale. Nevertheless, soul by its nature is subjective and somewhat an abstract concept. I will discuss soul in more detail in the section on further study.

### **Contribution to Research Methodology**

The greatest contribution this study makes to research methodology is in homiletical research design. The results indicate that research in the area of preaching needs to seriously consider a longitudinal design. This study included twenty-eight sermons over a period of fifty-seven weeks. The difficulty in this study was that the research subjects were very transient. Nearly two-thirds of the subjects moved before a third sample could be taken. The results of this research could have been even more significant if another sample could have been taken. Perhaps another sample would

provide a specific number of sermons needed before a statistically measurable change in the mean scores is observed.

### **Further Studies**

Apostolic vision was defined by six components developed from Scripture and from literature researched. The six components was then used to effectively communicate apostolic vision. A follow-up study to this research would explore whether or not this model is repeatable for an established church. Also further research could be made on how many sermons are needed to be heard to before statistically valid change is observed.

Whether this research method could be used for another subject area is an interesting question. Minger used similar methodology with a similar outcomes in a study on stewardship (134). Whatever subject chosen needs to be both multifaceted with a wealth of biblical content and application, and to be presented in numerous ways without becoming overdone and boring to the hearers. The strength of a study on apostolic vision or stewardship is that the topic is broad enough that reenforcement does not become redundant and seem manipulative and forced rather than reenforced. The weakness is that the broadness of the topic could result in the researcher feeling a bit overwhelmed by the task and becoming impatient with the process.

Maybe the most important single component for this research study is the effect of the soul on the enrollment of the subjects to the vision casted. The Soul subscale was sensitive to the number of sermons preached; almost mirroring the change in the Commitment subscale. Kalas posists that the soul determines the effectiveness of the preacher and the preaching event (Preaching from the Soul 11). I have no doubt that the soul significantly helped people to commit and enroll in the vision being casted. The soul influenced the outcome of the increased mean scores for the commitment subscale. The

credibility and believability conveyed by the soul were vital in building and cultivating apostolic vision. A research study measuring both the soul and affect of the subjects and how they relate to the effectiveness and enrollment in a vision being casted would provide much-needed research.

### **Final Remarks**

Chapter 2 of this research study concluded with three premises that a preacher needed to incorporate to build and cultivate apostolic vision:

1. Preaching with soul,
2. Preaching with clarity, and
3. Preaching with narrative imagination.

The findings of this research study demonstrated that these premises were met. The subjects heard, believed, understood, enrolled, and committed to apostolic vision.

## APPENDIX A

## SURVEY ONE QUESTIONNAIRE AND MAILINGS

## Survey One and Two Questionnaire

*In order to assure complete anonymity, please fill in the following boxes to create your own personal code.*

The first initial of your Mother's Maiden Name:

The last four digits of your Social Security Number:

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Your age:

3. The number of months you've been attending Shepherd of the Heart UMC:

*Please respond to the following statements with the Sunday Morning Worship in mind by circling one number to the right of each statement that most closely corresponds to your view.*

Survey Question	strongly agree	moderately agree	neither agree nor disagree	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
4. My ideas about the church will be listened to.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I experience God's presence during personal and corporate worship.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I believe I can make a difference in my community.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I invite friends to come to this church.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I matter more than budgets, buildings, and traditions.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am willing to commit to the high expectations of covenant membership.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The church has a very clear mission and purpose.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Our church is called to reach the poor, the oppressed, and the lost.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Our church believes in rooting people meaningfully in Scripture.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I want to become involved in this church's outreach to the non-churched.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I am needed to do the ministry of the church.	5	4	3	2	1

Survey Question	strongly agree	moderately agree	neither agree nor disagree	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
15. I could call on people from my church community to help me.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Prayer is very important to this church.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I get excited about inviting my non-churched friends to my church.	5	4	3	2	1
18. This church has compassion for broken people.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I experience joy in coming to this church.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I feel cared for by the pastor and the members of this church.	5	4	3	2	1
21. I understand the purpose, vision, and mission of this church.	5	4	3	2	1
22. I feel that there are many opportunities to encounter God at this church.	5	4	3	2	1
23. A real follower of Jesus Christ is a leader in the church.	5	4	3	2	1
24. I am or will become involved in a small group.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Everyone can do practical and simple acts to demonstrate God's love in effective ways.	5	4	3	2	1
26. I can state the core values of this church.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I can state the purpose and vision of this church.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I want this church to keep growing.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I will participate in the Kindness Ministry of the church.	5	4	3	2	1
30. I am using my spiritual gifts at this church.	5	4	3	2	1
31. The sermon fit the main idea what the scripture text was saying.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I followed the logic of the sermons preached..	5	4	3	2	1

Survey Question	strongly agree	moderately agree	neither agree nor disagree	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
33. The preacher talked with me rather than at me.	5	4	3	2	1
34. I wish preacher would stand behind a pulpit to deliver the sermon.	5	4	3	2	1
35. The preacher seemed hesitant to preach on the purpose and mission of the church.	5	4	3	2	1
36. God spoke to me through the sermons on the purpose and mission of the church.	5	4	3	2	1
37. At times, I felt the preacher's sermon and his life were not entirely consistent.	5	4	3	2	1
38. The sermons communicated that the preacher cares about people.	5	4	3	2	1
39. The stories (or images) used in the sermon helped me to understand the Bible better.	5	4	3	2	1
40. The sermon title helps me to remember the focus of the sermon.	5	4	3	2	1
41. The preacher had strong eye contact.	5	4	3	2	1
42. At points the sermon made me smile, laugh or chuckle.	5	4	3	2	1
43. The stories (or images) in the sermon made the sermon more meaningful.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I have gained new insights on the purpose and mission of the apostolic church.	5	4	3	2	1
45. The sermons were preached confidently.	5	4	3	2	1
46. I was glad to hear the sermons on the purpose and mission of the church.	5	4	3	2	1
47. I felt the preacher believed what he was saying.	5	4	3	2	1
48. I would prefer a sermon without the stories (or images).	5	4	3	2	1
49. The sermons touched my feelings and emotions.	5	4	3	2	1
50. The sermons were pleasurable to hear.	5	4	3	2	1

Survey Question	strongly agree	moderately agree	neither agree nor disagree	moderately disagree	strongly disagree
51. I understood how I could act on the sermon in my personal life.	5	4	3	2	1
52. After I heard the sermon, I thought, "I can do that!"	5	4	3	2	1

### Worship Attendance for Survey One Questionnaire

Please fill in the boxes for the sermons you have heard.

	Date	Sermon Series/ Sermon Title	Scripture
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/16/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>A Sense of Destiny</i>	Nehemiah 1:1-2:10
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/23/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Partners for the Journey</i>	Nehemiah 2:11-20
<input type="checkbox"/>	1/30/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Teamwork Works!</i>	Nehemiah 3:1-4:6
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/06/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Staying the Course</i>	Nehemiah 4:7-23
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/13/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Expanding the Vision</i>	Nehemiah 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/20/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Crossing the Finish Line</i>	Nehemiah 6
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/27/00	The Right Stuff/ <i>Gutsy Joy</i>	Nehemiah 8
<input type="checkbox"/>	4/16/00	The New Morning/ <i>A Day of Applause</i>	Luke 19:28-43
<input type="checkbox"/>	4/23/00	The New Morning/ <i>The Freshness of the New Morning</i>	John 20:1-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	4/30/00	The New Morning/ <i>There is Always a Way Home</i>	Luke 24:13-35
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/07/00	The New Morning/ <i>Meet God</i>	Acts 2:42-47
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/14/00	The New Morning/ <i>The Real Thing</i>	Acts 6:1-7
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/21/00	The New Morning/ <i>New Eyes...New Vision</i>	Acts 9:10-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	5/28/00	The New Morning/ <i>Reaching Out</i>	Acts 10:1-23
<input type="checkbox"/>	6/04/00	The New Morning/ <i>Going On-Line with God</i>	Acts 4:23-31

## Transmittal Letter for Survey One

THE REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. VOLZ

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July 12, 2000

Dear Friend:

You may be aware that I have been working on a dissertation project for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.

The first three chapters of the dissertation were completed and approved by my faculty committee in the Spring of 1999. Most of the library research for this project is now complete. It is time to collect data from a real, live congregation!

I am writing to ask for your assistance. Here is how you can help:

First, complete the enclosed six-page questionnaire. It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

Second, place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Finally, place the envelope in the mail by **Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study results.

Thank you for your participation.

Your Pastor,

*Chris A. Volz*



**APPENDIX B****SURVEY TWO QUESTIONNAIRE AND MAILINGS****Survey Two Questionnaire**

Same as Survey One except for Worship Attendance.

**Worship Attendance for Survey Two Questionnaire**

Please fill in the boxes for the sermons you have heard.

	DATE	SERMON SERIES /TITLE	SCRIPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 21/01	<i>Great Expectations/ You Matter to God</i>	Jeremiah 1:1-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 28 01	<i>Great Expectations/ Living a Life of Purpose</i>	Jeremiah 8:4-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 04 01	<i>Great Expectations/ Rich With Possibilities</i>	Jeremiah 18:1-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 11 01	<i>Great Expectations/ Investing in Tomorrow</i>	Jeremiah 32:6-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 18/01	<i>Great Expectations/ A Life Well-Spent</i>	Jeremiah 40:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 25 01	<i>The Heart of the Shepherd/ The Voice of the Shepherd</i>	Psalms 23
<input type="checkbox"/>	3/04/01	<i>The Heart of the Shepherd/ It Is Well With My Soul</i>	Psalms 23

## **Transmittal Letter for Survey Two**

### **Letter to Subjects Who Did Not Participate in Survey One**

**THE REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. VOLZ**

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March 27, 2001

Dear Friend:

You may be aware that I have been working on a dissertation project for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. The first three chapters of the dissertation were completed and approved by my faculty committee in the Spring of 1999. Most of the library research for this project is now complete.

It is time to collect data from a real, live congregation! I am writing to ask for your assistance. Here is how you can help:

First, complete the enclosed six-page questionnaire. It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

Second, place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Third, place the envelope in the mail by **Saturday, April 13.**

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study results.

Thank you for your participation.

Your Pastor,

*Chris A. Volz*

## Letter to Subjects Who May Have Filled Out Survey One

**THE REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. VOLZ**

---

March 28, 2001

Dear Friend:

I am appreciative of your participation in my dissertation project this past Summer.

There are two evaluation periods for this project. You had the opportunity to fill out the first one last Spring. I write to seek your assistance in completing the second and final evaluation period.

Here is how you can help:

First, complete the enclosed six-page questionnaire. It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

Second, place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Finally, place the envelope in the mail by **Saturday, April 14.**

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study results.

Thank you for your participation

Your Pastor,

*Chris A. Volz*

## Letter to Subjects Who Did Not Participate in Survey One

**THE REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. VOLZ**

---

March 27, 2001

Dear Friend:

You may be aware that I have been working on a dissertation project for a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary.

The first three chapters of the dissertation were completed and approved by my faculty committee in the Spring of 1999. Most of the library research for this project is now complete. It is time to collect data from a real, live congregation!

I am writing to ask for your assistance. Here is how you can help:

First, complete the enclosed six-page questionnaire. It will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

Second, place your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Finally, place the envelope in the mail by **Saturday, April 13.**

Here is my pledge to you:

1. No attempt will be made to match returned questionnaires to individuals within the congregation.
2. Because all responses are vital to this research, every returned questionnaire will be gratefully received and included in the study results.

Thank you for your participation.

Your Pastor,

*Chris A. Volz*

## APPENDIX C

### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY ABOUT VISION

- **“A realistic, credible, attractive future for an organization” (Nanus 8).** Always deals with the future. Image of a more desirable future. A signpost pointing the way. Central to leadership
- **“Articulates a picture of the future that others can grasp” (Odgen 180).** Dream dreams. Transformational—brings about life-change. Big picture.
- **“A clear mental picture of a preferable future imparted by God” (Barna 28).** A visual reality—dreams the possible dream. A portrait of conditions that do not exist currently. Uniquely belongs to the leader. Stretches reality to extend beyond the existing state. Creates a better situation. Concentrates on the future. Reflects on what God wants through the leader.
- **“Ability to picture and describe some future state” (Tichy & Devanna 126).** The ideal to strive for. Produces challenge to make change. A set of blueprints for the future. Appeals to the emotions. Holistic—uses both logic and intuition.
- **“An ideal and unique image of the future” (Kouzes and Posner 95).** What makes something special-looking. A future orientation. The capacity to be forward. A picture of what could be. A standard of excellence.
- **“Images in our minds” (Jones 18).** The picture in a frame. Originates in the hearts and minds of the people. Formed in the mind of the leader. Provides the blueprint for the journey.
- **“A specific destination, a picture of a desired future” (Senge 149).** Concrete—shapes the future. Pictures and images in our heads and hearts. Rooted in own set of values, concerns, and aspirations. Fosters risk-taking and experimentation. Creative tension between reality and vision.
- **“A picture of preferred future” (Weems 39).** A dream. A picture of what is possible. Allows us to see beyond the visible. Compels and captivates us to act. The story through which one sees reality. Gives meaning, direction, and life to one’s efforts.

## APPENDIX D

## SERMON EVALUATIONS BY DOCTOR JIM JACKSON

Sermon Series: The Right Stuff	A Sense of Destiny	Partners for the Journey	Teamwork Works!	Stay the Course	Expanding the Vision	Crossing the Finish Line
<b>PREACHING WITH CLARITY</b>						
Does the sermon do justice to the text?	Yes	Very good	Very good	Excellent	Excellent	Very good
Has the preacher developed the thoughts in a logical persuasive way?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Has the sermon developed in such practical ways that the hearer knows how to put it in use in daily life?	Somewhat	Effective in casting vision	Constantly casts vision	Yes	Yes	Somewhat
<b>PREACHING WITH NARRATIVE IMAGINATION</b>						
Can you summarize the purpose of the sermon?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is it true to its life?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Very good	Somewhat	Somewhat
Does it make good use of illustrative material?	No	Effective	Yes	Yes	Steady stream	Yes
Does the illustrative material have variety?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	absolutely	Yes
Is the sermon so easy to follow, and inherently logical, that you can pretty well reconstruct it in your mind?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>PREACHING WITH SOUL</b>						
What do you especially like about this sermon?	Integrity of preacher	Passion of the preacher	Effective connection to Communion	Greatly inspiring	Preacher's excitement was infectious	Preacher's passion and integrity
What troubles you about it?	Intro. too long	Intro too long	Intro too long	Nothing	Nothing	Intro too long
Has the sermon made any measurable difference in your thinking or your projected living?	Affirm what was said	Affirm what was said	Affirm what was said	Felt inspired	Felt inspired	Affirm what was said

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